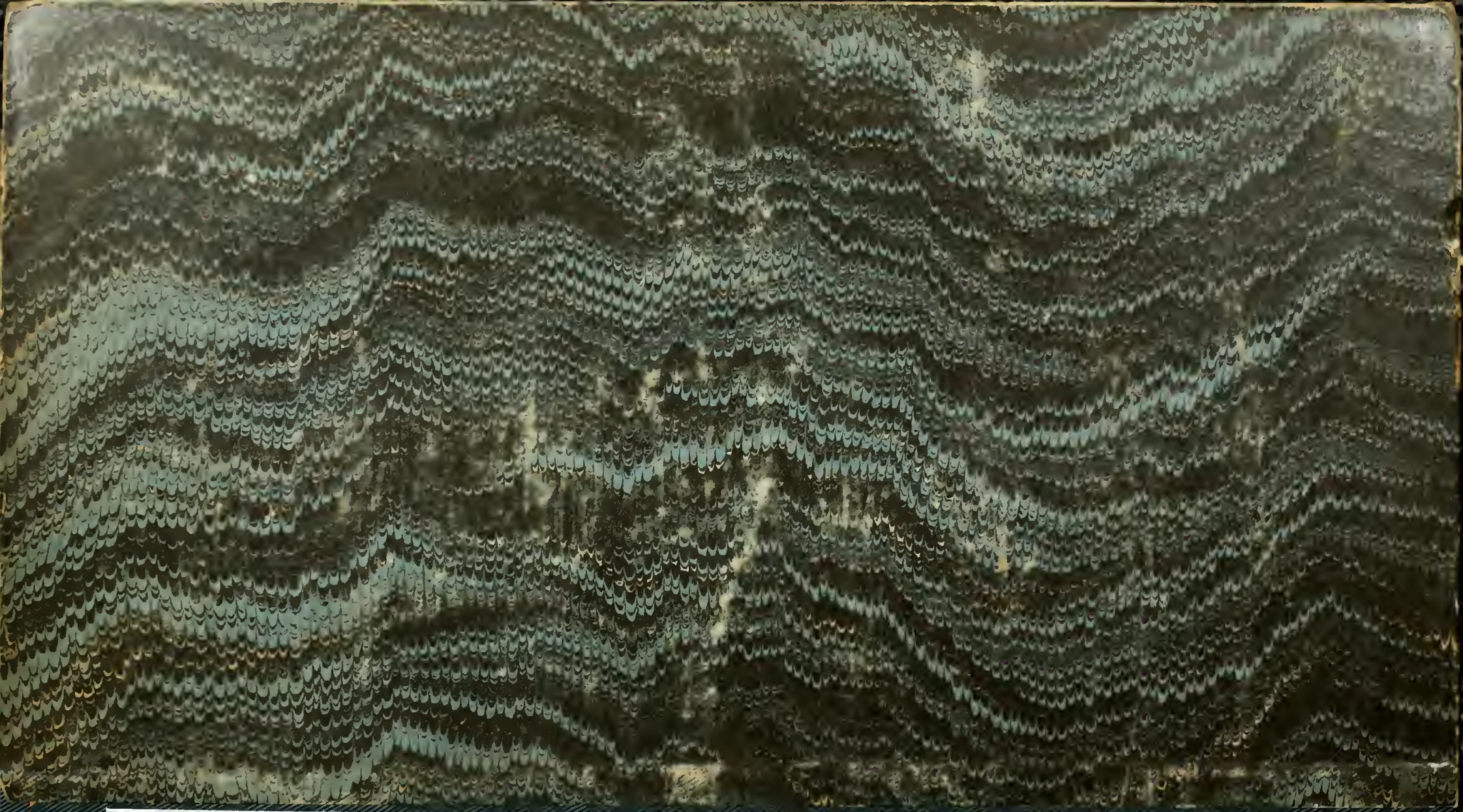

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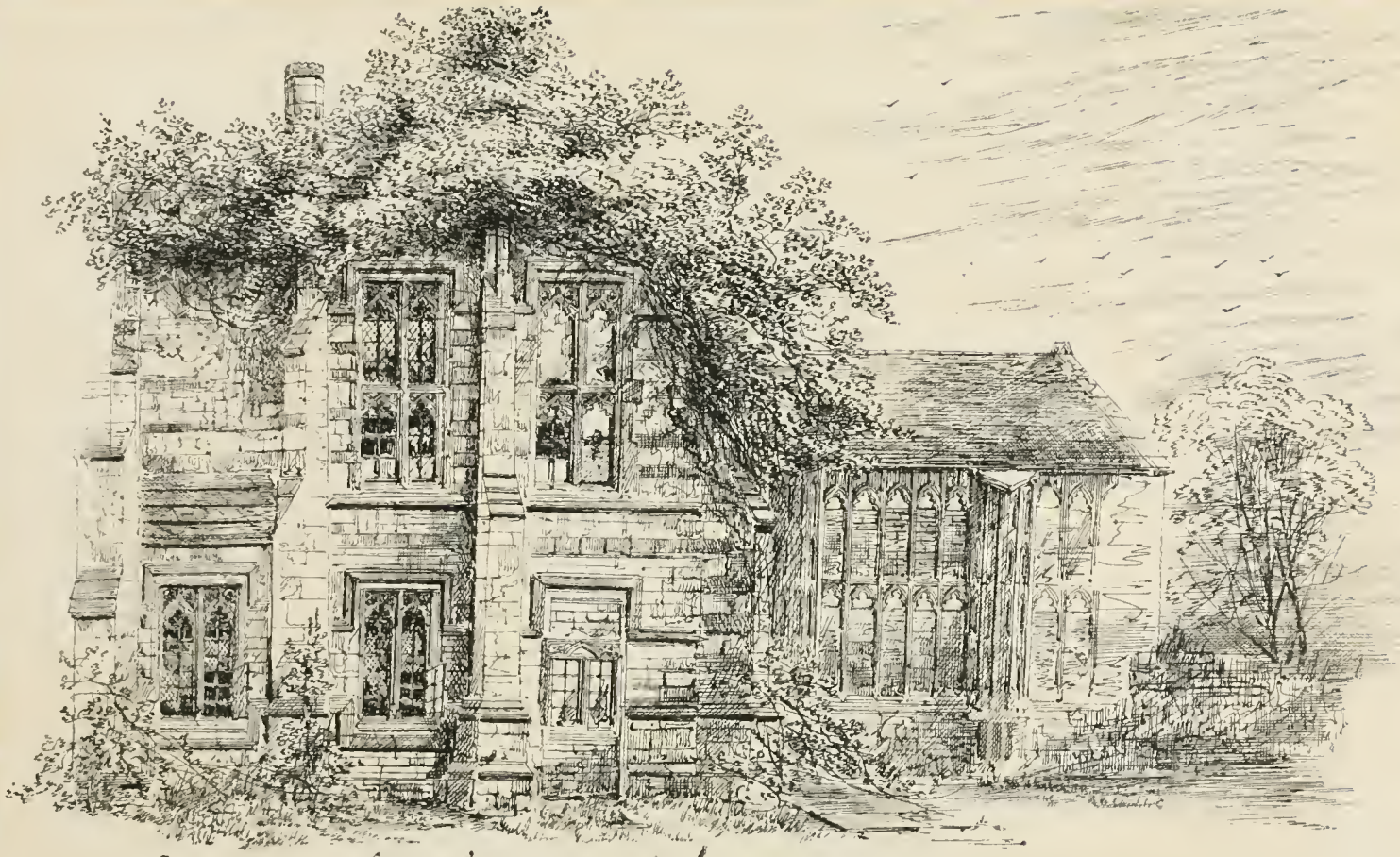

The remains of the South Front : Quchelwey Abbey : Somerset.
Drawn in Anastatic by Alfred : Alexandr : Clarke : Wells : 1859
Plate II + Quomam [illegible]

1250
H

A MEMOIR

OF

Muchelney Abbey,

IN THE

COUNTY OF SOMERSET.

BY

THOMAS HUGO, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.S.L., &c.;

HONORARY MEMBER OF THE SOMERSETSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY,
&c., &c., &c.

Taunton:
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1859.

REPRINTED, WITH ADDITIONS,

FROM THE

Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society,

VOL. VIII.

CORRIGENDA.

Page	11	line	17	*for* æs alienum *read* es alienu'
„	„	„	19	*after* recipiant *add* ,
„	19	„	26	*for* work *read* worst.
„	24	„	30	*for* preciosis *read* pretiosis
„	40	„	18	*for* liberacoe'm *read* liberaco'em
„	„	„	22	*for* Aplo'm *read* Aploru'
„	„	„	26	*for* pages 99, 100. *read* 24, 25.
„	42	„	21	*for* suor' *read* suoru'
„	43	„	21	*for* d'nu *read* dnu'
„	44	„	5	*for* Muchelney *read* Muchilney
„	45	„	26	*for* vicariu' *read* vicario
„	47	„	20	*for* Gillet *read* Gilbet
„	50	„	8	*after* possessionem *add* ,
„	51	„	24	*for* ep'atum *read* ep'atu
„	32	The Ground-plan, after Buckler, has been executed by Mr. T. Crump, of the Taunton School of Art, and not by Mr. Clarke.		

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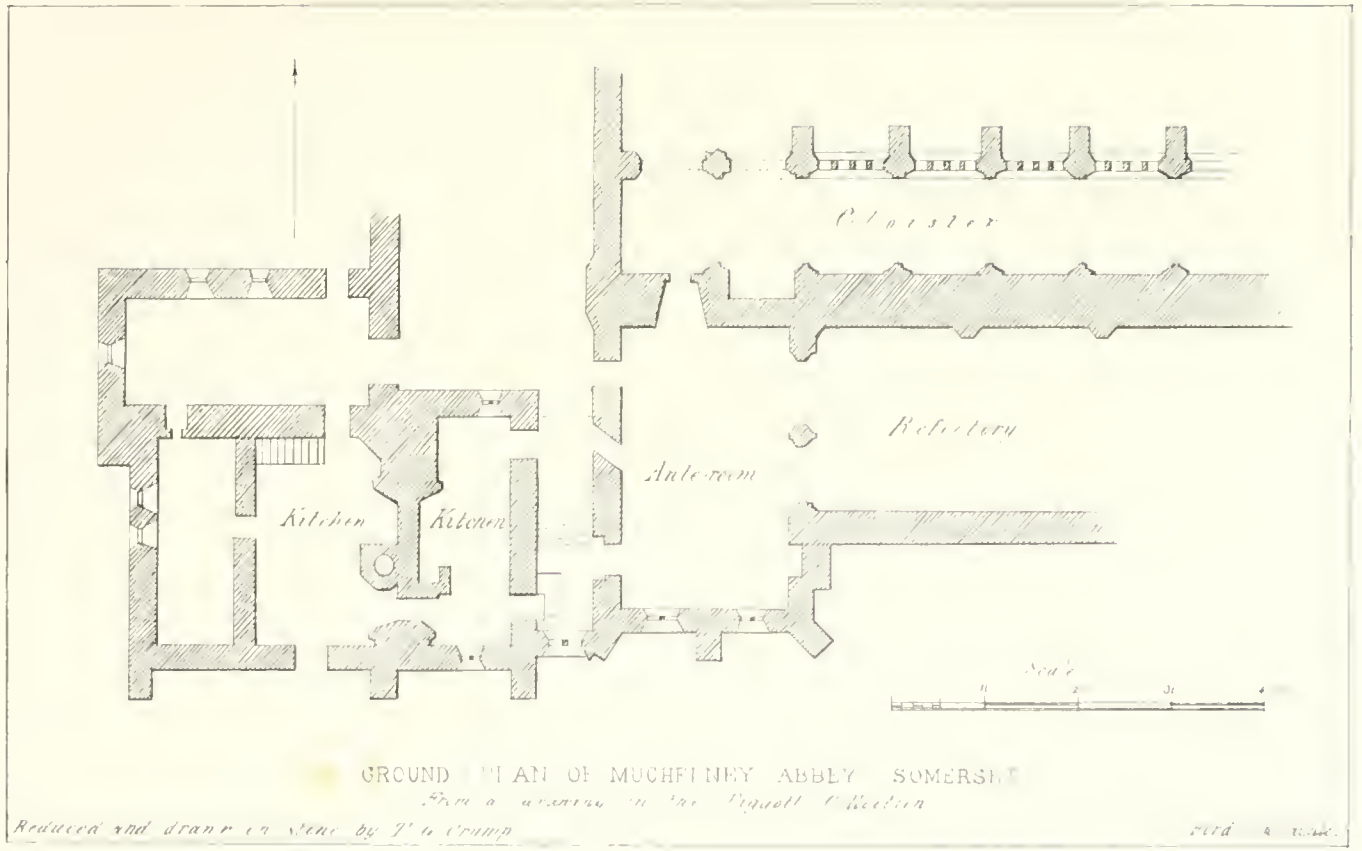
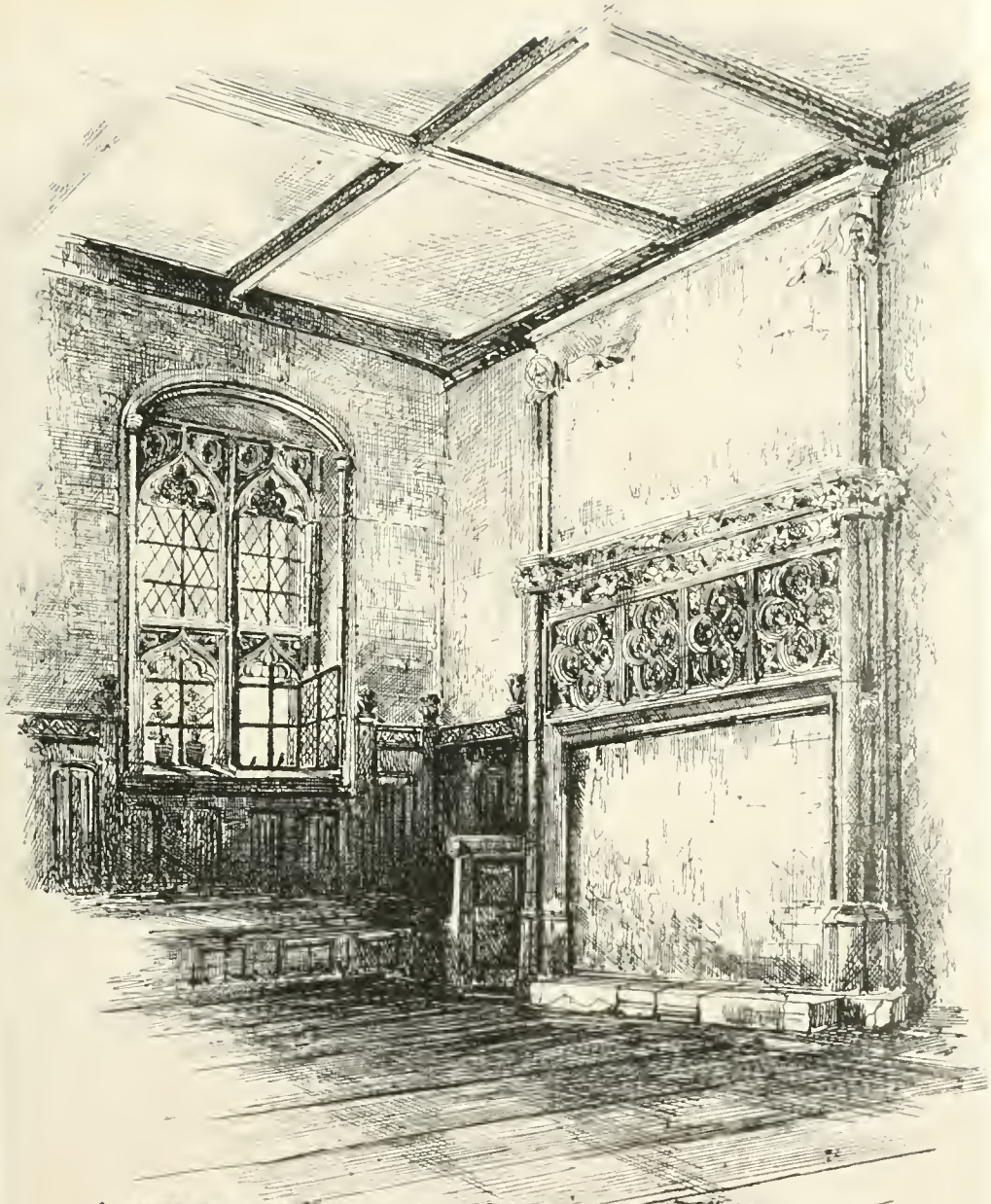


GROUND PLAN OF MUCHELNEY ABBEY SOMERSET

From a drawing in the Pigott Collection

Reduced and drawn on Stone by J. H. Crump *Printed at the Ordnance Office*

MUCHELNEY



The Abbot's Chamber: Ducheluey Abbey: Somerset.

Drawn in Annotatio by: Alfred Alex. Clarke: Wells. 1859.

Plate III+ Averte mala inimicis meis: et in veritate tua dispersi illos

The Remains of the North Cloistered Front of the Abbey of S.S. Peter and Paul at Muchelney : Somersetshire . Drawn in Anastatic by Alfred A. Clarke Artist : Wells : AD : 1859

Deo : et Sanctis ejus Deus salutaris noster : et ubere misse Deus noster in nos

Muchelney Abbey.

THE traveller in Somersetshire, as he leaves the high ground on which the town of Langport is situated, may well be pardoned, whatever be his mission, or the urgency of his business, for lingering every now and then on his downward path, as the beauties of the opening landscape successively present themselves to his view. Scarcely has he bidden farewell to the last humble homestead, when his notice is attracted by the exquisite tower of Huish Episcopi, with its pierced battlement, delicate pinnacles, and elaborate bands of foliated ornamentation—a marvel of the Perpendicular age of English ecclesiastical architecture. Passing from this, his eye may roam over an almost boundless expanse of plain, where, when I last beheld it, high grass was bending to the breezes of a lovely morning in June, while here and there in the distance immense corn fields might be discerned, less agitated than the former, and with more slowly and majestically vibrating surface. Straight into the midst runs a hedgeless road, of apparently uniform width and level, but

eventually lost in the misty horizon. At intervals the ear also may be employed, and can detect the lowings of unseen herds, borne faintly on the wind from remote pastures. Far away in the midst of this ocean of greenery, lies, singularly contrasting with the unvarying flatness of the surrounding tract, an island of trees—dark, sombre, and motionless—giving mysterious suggestions of reward to feet which shall undertake the toil and travail of the intervening reach. After an hour's walk the shady eminence is gained. The aspect of the scene immediately and entirely changes. A church and ancient vicarage house are first visible, leaving which on his left hand, and making his way through a large farm-yard, surrounded by goodly barns, ricks and wheat mows, the traveller is suddenly brought to a stand, in a mode which he will not easily forget. An exquisite group of buildings—half ecclesiastical, half domestic—lies before him. Luxuriant ivy conceals the greater portion of the nearest edifice ; but he can catch delightful glimpses of mullioned windows, and rich buttresses, and delicate battlements, topped by a picturesque stack of ornamental chimneys, and, beyond the main dwelling, of a wall, profusely covered with panel-work and other decorative adjuncts, in which the builders of the Perpendicular era delighted to indulge. The mysterious indications which were suggested to him several miles away have not, he finds, deceived him. He feels a charm, and breathes an atmosphere of beauty. The very name of the place, uttered, written, or printed, has for him, or at least for many a wayfarer, something, and not a little, about it of special and peculiar fascination. He is within the sacred precincts of Muchelney Abbey!

For many hundred years Religion has called the place her own. Here, so far away as in Anglo-Saxon times, a

sacred community was located, which brought refinement and civilization to a spot remote from the eye of the great world, and little better than a wilderness. A dismal extent of morass lay around, almost as widely as ken could reach, hardly safe for the foot even in the summer of occasional years, and during the winter altogether impassable. The place, indeed, as William of Malmesbury asserts, was selected for these very characteristics.* Highway to it there was none. Visitors, in the ordinary sense of the term, were few and far between. Their isolation, however, from all the world was welcomed by the brotherhood as a boon, and assisted, no doubt, to invest themselves and their abode with a halo of additional sanctity.

Alfred, Ina, and Athelstan, are each named as the founder of the House, which was one of the many establishments owing obedience to the Benedictine rule. The claims of the two monarchs first mentioned are more than doubtful, and the most trustworthy of the ancient chroniclers unite in attributing the honour to the last-named sovereign. It was, according to Matthew of Westminster, in the year 939 that the Abbey of Muchelney, or, as it is variously written, Michelney, Mochelney, Muchenay, etc., was founded by the amiable and pious Athelstan, the first monarch of all England. The grandson and favourite of the great Alfred, he had encountered, five years before the date just mentioned, an enormous host of Anglo-Danes, Irish, Northmen, Scotch levies, and Welsh bands, collected under the command of their native princes. A portion of these were sufficiently numerous to fill above six hundred

* "Contulit author et villarum et reliquiarum xenia, eoque plus quod monachi liberius cœlestibus possint exuberare secretis quo minus frequentantur hominum conventiculis. Est enim aditu difficilis, permeaturque æstate pede vel equo plerumque, hieme nusquam." *W. Malmesb.* fol. 145, b.

vessels, and the whole force was believed to be the largest that had ever been embodied on English ground. The battle was fought at some unidentified place in the north of England, named Brunanburgh, henceforth famous in Saxon and Scandinavian song, and a most terrific slaughter ensued. The killed were innumerable, and included the son of the King of Scots, five Sea-Kings, and seven Jarls. Filled with gratitude for this signal deliverance, the pious king, whose dominion was thus secured, founded and munificently endowed a number of religious houses, one of which was that with whose history we are now particularly concerned.

I am aware that the motive which influenced Athelstan in the foundation of this Abbey is stated, after the too frequent fashion of modern abbey historians, to have been remorse for the murder of his eldest brother Edwin. This prince, as it is asserted, upon a false report that he was plotting to destroy him, Athelstan had conveyed to sea in an open boat, and had thus relieved himself of an unscrupulous rival. Such an idle tale is not only entirely opposed to every trait which is known of his merciful and beneficent character, but, what is more, is apparently doubted even by the writer who mentions it. The Saxon Chronicle, upon which too much reliance can hardly be placed, merely says "that Ædwine the Etheling was drowned at sea." Athelstan's charter of the foundation of Middleton Monastery, about which a similar story exists, makes no allusion to Edwin's death, which would hardly have been the case had these Abbeys been founded in its expiation. We may dismiss, therefore, the notion either of Edwin's murder, or of our Abbey's origination through remorse for such a crime, to those regions of romance, in which it might appropriately find a place.

The House was dedicated to the Apostles, St. Peter, and St. Paul; and considerable care was taken to supply by art and generosity what was deficient in the nature of the locality itself. Few human beings would have selected such a spot for their habitation, apart from that love of religious privacy to which its lonely position so eminently ministered.

According to an ancient calendar, the conventual Church was dedicated on the 7th of January, A.D. 939. Athelstan endowed it with many and princely benefactions—"prædiis multis et possessionibus ampliavit," (*Harl. MS.* 261, f. 107, b.)—an example which, according to Collinson, was followed by many monarchs both before and after the Norman Conquest.* Unfortunately the charter of the founder is not extant. At the period, however, of the Domesday record, about a century and a half subsequent to the foundation, the Abbey was possessed of four carucates of land in the three islands of "Michelenie," "Midelenie," and "Torleie;" two hides and a half at "Cipestaple;" twenty hides in "Ileminstre;" six hides and a half in "Ile;" twenty hides in "Draitune;" ten hides in "Camelle;" and a hide and a half in "Cathangre." In the specification of the property there occur woods, meadows, pastures, a fishery, mills, a vineyard at Muchelney, a market at Ilminster, &c. The rents are stated to amount to £51 16s.

In the Taxatio of Pope Nicholas IV, made about 1291, the following notices occur:

Decanatus Ivelcestr'.

Eccl'ia de Muchelneye	...	6	0	0 p. 197.

* Collinson's *History of Somerset*, vol. iii, p. 134.

Decanatus de Merston.

Abbas de Muchelneye ...	8	0	0	Cammel Abb'is.	
Decanatus Ivelcestr'.					[p. 203.
Muchelneye. Abbas de Muchelneye	7	14	0		
Ivelcestr'. P'och. Sc'i Joh'is Abbas de Muchelneye	0	6	0		
Decanatus de Crake.					
Ile Abb'is Bradene. Abbas de Muchelneye	6	12	6		
Fyfhyde. Abbas de Muchelneye	2	0	0		
Ilmynystr'. Abbas de Muchelneye, P'benda ...	8	10	0		p. 204.

The Patent and other rolls of John, Edward I, Edward III, Richard II, Henry IV, Henry VI, and Edward IV,* furnish us with various particulars, including the names of localities in which were situated the landed and other possessions of the Abbey. Mention is here made of the Manor of Muchelney; the rents of assize of Ile Abbatis, Ilmystre, Fyfhede, Westover, Drayton, Cammell, Yerneshill, Downhede, and Hylcombe; the rents of tenements at Mydelenie, Yevelcestre, Lamport, Merston, Milton, Audresey, and Chypstapull; the rent of a house in Yevyll; the rectories of Muchelney, Ile Abbatis, Ilmystre, Hylcombe, Horton, Fyfhede, Mowreton, Somerton, Meriett,

* Pat. 19 Hen. III, p. 9. Pat. 21 Hen. III, m. 2. Pat. 36 Hen. III. Fin. 6 Johan, m. 16. Cart. 7 Johan, m. 7, n. 62. Plac. in Com. Somers. 8 Edw. I, assis. rot. 13. Ib. rot. 15, Pat. 18 Edw. I, m. 22. Pat 2 Edw. III, p. 1, m. 34. Pat. 6 Edw. III, p. 2. Pat. 9 Edw. III, p. 2. Pat. 13 Edw. III, p. 1. Pat. 32 Edw. III, p. 2, m. 18. Fin. Somers. 33 Edw. III, n. 44. Pat. 34 Edw. III, p. 3, m. 5. Pat. 40 Edw. III, p. 2, m. 42. Pat. 43 Edw. III, p. 1, m. 36. Pat. 8 Ric. II, p. 2, m. 2. Pat. 16 Ric. II, p. 1, m. 30. Pat. 18 Ric. II, p. 1, m. 14. Pat. 9 Hen. IV, p. 2, m. 23. Pat. 23 Hen. VI, p. 1, m. 5. Pat. 5 Edw. IV, p. 2, m. 10.

and Drayton ; and the advowsons of the churches of Muchelney, Drayton, Ile Abbatis, Ilmyster, Hylcombe, Horton, Fyfhede, Somerton, Moreton, Meriett, and Chypstapull, and of two chantries in Ilmyster. According to the computation of Dugdale, the revenues amounted in 1534 to £447 5s., and, according to that of Speed, to £498 16s. 3¼d.

It is certified that the Abbat, in the 12th of Hen. II, held his lands, after the custom of his predecessors, by the service of one knight's fee ; in the 14th of Henry III, that he paid three marks for one knight's fee towards the king's first passage into Brittany ; and, in the 38th of Hen. III, that the same sum was contributed towards the aid for making a knight of the king's eldest son.

The Abbat was also prebendary of Ilminster. On the 29th of November, 1201, Richard, the then Abbat, and his convent, made a grant to Savaricus, Bishop of Bath and Glastonbury, of the church of Ilminster, which was afterwards converted into a prebend, annexed to the Abbey, and held by the Abbat down to the Dissolution.*

Hearne has printed in the first volume of the *Historia de Rebus gestis Glastoniensibus* of Adam de Domerham, a large and interesting collection of documents relating to Muchelney Abbey, to some of which reference has already been made, including a few of general interest.† These consist, *inter alia*, of a Taxatio Spiritualium et Temporalium, Articuli Visitatorum, charters of Edward III in

* *Anglia Sacra*, vol. i, p. 563. *Chron. Walt. Hemingf.* vol. ii., p. 620. *Reg. Welt.*, i, fol. 41.

† Hearne has given, as a reason for the publication of these documents, the fact that next to nothing was previously known of the House in question. "De hac abbatia egregia aliquot nuper edidimus, e Codicibus MSS. honoratissimi nobilissimique Domini Caroli Baronis Bruce, ad initium Adami de Domerham, idque ea potissimum de caussa, *quia jam antea paucissima de eadem consignaverunt scriptores Monastici hactenus in lucem editi.*"—Lib. Nig. Scac. Lond. 1771, Vol. I, p. 89.

reference to the Manor of Dounhevede, pleas respecting the common pasture of Kyngesmor, in the manor of Somerton ; a corrody granted to Ralph Drake, chantry priest ; a presentation to the chantry of S. Martin in the cathedral church of Wells ; an ordination of the vicarage of Muchelney ; a charter concerning Draytone and Bortone ; a receipt to make wode ; extenta de Martok ; de pastura de Whattmore ; carta de Meriette ; a composition between the convent of Muchelney and the rector of West Cammelle ; a calendar ; and a perambulation of the forest of Neracchist. Several portions of the forest are represented as held by the Abbat of Muchelney, and mention occurs of "quidam mons qui vocatur Castrum de Rachich," doubtless the hill which is conspicuously visible from many parts of the Vale of Taunton, and vulgarly, though, as it thus appears, with indisputable propriety, called "Castle Rach."

The Abbat of Muchelney was an ecclesiastic of high rank and consequence. He wore the mitre, but does not appear to have had a seat in parliament.

A list of these dignitaries, collected from the records, is given by Dugdale and others, to whom I would refer the reader. It is imperfect, and must remain so until a work be executed to which I shall presently advert, and which would furnish us with the best materials now remaining for its construction. Liuuardus is incidentally mentioned in the Domesday record, as Abbat in the time of Edward the Confessor; Richard occurs in 1205 ; another Richard was Abbat, 1235; Walter, 1248; John de Barneville, 1251; William de Gyvele, 1274; Ralph de Muchelney, 1293: John de Hentone, 1303 ; John de Somerton, 1334 ; Thomas de Overton, 1353 ; William de Shepton, 1371 ; Nicholas de Strotton, 1397 ; John Bruton, 1400 ; John Cherde, 1433 ; Thomas Pipe or Pippe, 1463 ; William

Crokehorn, or Crnkern, 1466; John Bracy, 1470; William Wyk, or Wyke, 1489; Thomas Broke, 1504; John Shirborn, or Scherborne, 1522; and Thomas Yve, 1532. I need not occupy further time and space by repeating what every inquirer can consult without difficulty, and what has already been many times committed to the press.

I gladly turn to a fragment of hitherto unpublished information in the following extracts from two of the *Harleian MSS.*, which give us a view of the Society in the ordinary exercise of their rights as patrons of the benefices already noticed as being in their possession.

The MSS. to which I refer (*Harl.* 6964 and 6965) contain extracts from the registers of several of the Bishops of Bath and Wells, particularly of Bp. Johannes de Drokensford, 1309-1329, and of Bp. Radulphus de Salopia, 1329-1363. They were made by Matthew Hutton in the year 1686. The far greater portion of these refer to the presentation of clerks to various benefices, with the names of the several patrons, etc. The Abbat and Convent of Muchelney are noticed as presenting to the Church of "Muchelnaye," *Harl. MS.* 6964, p. 11; to "Muchelney," p. 50; to "Somerton," p. 58; to "Chipstaple," p. 102; to "Fifhide," p. 116; to "Wyke," p. 142; to "Chipstaple," p. 144; to the place of a chantry priest in the chapel of Blessed Mary of "Wyk, Perham, juxta Lamport," p. 145; to "Muchelney," *Harl. MS.* 6965, p. 148; to "Fifhide," p. 148; to "Mochelney," p. 165; to "Somerton," p. 173; to "Ile Abbat," p. 204; to the place of a chantry priest in the chapel of S. Martin, in the church of Wells, p. 223; to "Somerton," p. 229; and to "Vyfhyde," p. 249.

I would here very urgently suggest that nothing could more excellently serve the cause of archæology in this

kingdom than the careful transcript and accurate publication of the Episcopal Registers. It would go far to furnish lists of the several abbats, priors, and other officers of many conventual bodies, as well as of the rectors and vicars of parish churches and chapelries. In fact it would present the antiquary with a clear and truthful picture of ecclesiastical matters at large during any given period, and would constitute of itself a parochial history for the entire district. Possessed of such an authority, the student might read without difficulty, and in the most assuredly conclusive of all possible ways, the successive changes which have eventuated in every locality, the consecutive annals of every parish, too insignificant perhaps for the notice of the so-called county history, but not less interesting on that account to the individual incumbent, landowner, native, or casual resident. I am persuaded that, notwithstanding what Dr. Archer has done in a similar field of research, which may be found in the second volume of Hearne's *Chronicle of Walter Hemingford*, pp. 585-638, the preparation and publication of such a work, so far as the Registers at Wells could furnish the materials, would be one of the best and most useful labours on which the funds of our Society could possibly be employed.

The history of Muchelney seems, so far as we can gather it, to have been one of not unfrequent trouble. The Abbat was disseised, or dispossessed, of his lands and other possessions, by the king's command, as I find by an entry in the Great Roll of the 3rd year of K. John. We know not the particulars, except that he had to pay three marks of gold, or thirty marks of silver, to regain possession. It does not appear to have been an ordinary fine, but con-

nected with some peculiar circumstances of which we are ignorant. The record gives no explanation :

> "Abbas de Muchelneia debet iii marcas auri vel xxx marcas argenti, pro habenda saisina Abbatiæ suæ et terræ suæ et rerum suarum, unde dissaisitus fuit per præceptum regis."
>
> Mag. Rot. 3 Joh. b. Dors. et Sumers.

A little more than a century afterwards the House was in debt, perhaps for some additions to the Society's buildings, or possibly from the carelessness or incompetence of the officer entrusted with the funds. The evil does not, however, appear to have been of greater magnitude than to necessitate the Bishop's permission to the Abbat and Convent to superintend in their own person the expenditure during one year :

> "Id. Sep. 1317. D'ns Ep'us concedit Abb. et Conv. de Muchelney, ut propter æs alienum officiu' Sacristarie p' unu' annum in manus suas recipiant et de fructibus ejusd' disponere."*

It would appear also, from what we can derive through brief and obscure announcements, that the Abbey was repeatedly and, perhaps, sorely tried by endeavours to subject it to the neighbouring house of Glastonbury. William of Malmesbury gives us some particulars of one of these attempts which was made in the eleventh century against the Abbats of Muchelney and Athelney. The one replied with jest, and the other with logic, but with doubtful success.† Nor is it by any means improbable that some, if not all, of those "visitations," to which I shall presently direct the reader's attention, were instituted

* *MS. Harl.* 6964, p. 54.

† *Will. Malmesb. de Antiq. Glaston. Eccl.* Ed. Gale, fol. Oxon, 1691, tom. iii, p. 331.

not so much on account of any irregularities in the establishment itself, as from the desire of the more powerful neighbour to add to its already comprehensive dominion. Means would hardly be wanting to effect, if possible, so cherished a design.

Be this, however, as it may, the storm which indiscriminately assailed every religious establishment in the country during the first half of the sixteenth century, put a summary termination to these and all other differences, if they still survived, by exterminating the contending parties. Long before that time, doubtless, all such causes of dispute had been laid to rest, and the Abbat and Convent of Muchelney had been allowed to hold their own, in the terms of the ancient charters—*bene, quiete, et in pace*—so as to carry out into good effect the sacred purposes for which they were instituted. At last, however, after centuries of benefit and blessing to the land, forgotten by many and ill-requited by more, the tempest descended upon this House of God. The demons of cruelty, avarice, and wrong, were let loose. Every passion that can degrade man to the brute's level was dominant. The excesses that were committed under pretence of religion, for it was but a pretence, would hardly be credited by modern readers, most of whom have been carefully educated to believe the worst of the sufferers, and the best of their unprincipled enemies. Those were, indeed, the days of "trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy," of which it were well that we knew more, and took to heart the lesson, however painful, that their memorials can so graphically, so touchingly, and so truthfully convey.

In the 30th year of Henry VIII the king granted the monastery and manor of Muchelney, together with many other lands belonging to the House, to Edward, Earl of

Hertford, better known as Duke of Somerset. Amesbury, in Wiltshire; Maiden Bradley, in the same county; Ottery, in Devon; Wimborne, in Dorset; Shene, in Surrey; Sion, in Middlesex, and several other religious houses, were his fearful share of the general plunder. It will not be amiss to add that, in common with the other receivers of these lands, the hand of God fell heavily upon him. He was one of the most unfortunate of mankind, and ended his life on the block in the year 1552. Five years before the suppression Thomas Yve, the Abbot of Muchelney, and his Convent, had pledged a considerable quantity of plate, in goblets, crnets, pastoral staff, censer, spice plate, candlesticks, &c., to Sir John Baker and Richard Rakeelyffe, of Exeter, for one hundred pounds of lawful English money.* This sum was, I believe, expended by them on various buildings, foreseeing, doubtless, as they did, the rapidly gathering storm, and knowing that everything that was moveable would soon be at the mercy of unscrupulous and greedy inquisitors, whose very mission within their consecrated precincts was one of hardly disguised robbery and studied spoliation. The attempt, however, to remain masters of their own, however ingenious and reasonable, was frustrated by the spirit of wholesale confiscation which presently exhibited its tendencies in the complete annihilation of multitudes of religious establishments. Like hundreds of other Houses, Muchelney Abbey fell under the spoiler's hand, and left little except its name to tell how pious kings gave, and holy men served God; and how, in a faithless age, and for their own bad purposes, a monarch tyrannized, courtiers coveted, and a whole land was seduced, till wrong had gone too far for remedy.

Thomas Yve, as I before stated, was the last Abbat.

* Cart. Offic. Augment.

Together with Richard Coscob, prior, John Montacute, and eight others, he subscribed to the king's supremacy, July 2, 1534, 26 Henry VIII, and afterwards to the surrender, Jan. 3, 1538, 29 Henry VIII. Sacrilege and murder were horribly rife; and of those of the brethren whom it had been thought proper to pension—the individuals, we may presume, who offered the least opposition to the tyrant's designs—only two are mentioned as continuing to survive the outrage down to the second year of Queen Mary:

"Mochelney, nuper Monasterium.
Annuit. Georg. More per annum lx^{s}. Johannes Plumber per annum lx^{s}."

An impression of the seal of the Abbey is appended to two documents still preserved in the Augmentation Office; and an outline of it is given in the last edition of *Dugdale*, drawn and engraved by John Coney. The device consists of two figures under canopies—one of them representing St. Peter, crowned, and habited in a richly-ornamented cope, with his right hand uplifted in the act of benediction, and holding in his left the papal crossed staff; the other representing St. Paul, with his usual insignia, a book and a sword. On either side is an angel holding a shield—that on the right charged with the keys and sword, that on the left with a saltire. The legend is defective, but reads, as much of it as is legible:—

* * * * Abbatis Et Conventus * *
* * * * ii De Muchelney.

So far as the ordinary history of the Abbey is concerned, I might here come to a conclusion. I might, indeed, say something of the subsequent possessors, and make them tell us how they enjoyed the spoil, and what reason they had to be satisfied with the perilous possession. This,

however, will hardly be expected of me. I will, nevertheless, solicit the reader's attention for a few moments longer—first, to illustrate the subject by a very interesting commentary which I have unexpectedly met with among the MSS. treasures of the British Museum, and quote entire: and, secondly, to offer some remarks on, and, I hope, to afford some insight into, the system of Monastic Visitation, of which this Abbey seems to have been the not unusual scene. Towards the elucidation of this last point also, I am happy to be able to offer some new and unpublished materials, derived from the same vast depository to which I have just referred.

On Friday, the 25th of November, 1725, the learned antiquary, Thomas Hearne, wrote as follows to his friend James West, "at No. 7, in Fig-tree Court, in the Inner Temple, London" :—

"Dear Sir,

"I shall be glad to peruse your Extracts from the Leiger Book of Christ's Hospital in Abbington, tho' I suppose they might be taken from the same Leiger Book that I have quoted pag. 198 of the $\overline{\text{IX}}^{\text{th}}$ Vol. of Leland's Itin. in which Vol. I have also printed the Table, you mention, at large, Mr. Leland himself having taken some Notes from it.

"You judge rightly, that Robert Halstead's Book is a very great Curiosity. I do not remember any thing distinctly about it; but I think I have seen it. I would fain have some short account of this Halstead, who and what he was, and whether he was a Man of Learning.

"I suppose the Catalogue, you speak of, contains Sir Thomas Sebright's MSS. as well as printed Books. Any note you shall take from it will be acceptable, especially

since I have not an opportunity of seeing the Catalogue my self.

"Some time ago I saw in your hands a MS. of W^m. of Malmesbury's Life of S^t. Dunstan. But having had only a transient View of it, I cannot tell, whether it contains any thing more than what we have already in print about that Saint.

"In the Cotton Libr. Julius F. X. 13, is an Account of the foundation of several Monasteries, in England. I take hold of your generous Offer, and desire that you would be pleased to see, whether, in that Account, there be any mention of Michelney Abbey in Somersetshire.

"I have not seen the Defence you mention. I doubt not but 'tis a poor edgless Thing, far beneath my notice. 'Tis a very shrewd Sign of a wretched Cause, when the Advocates for it are such vile infamous Wretches.

"I saw Mr. Whiteside last Sunday Night, just after your's came to hand. He told me he rec^d your Letter.

"I am, Dear Sir,

"Your most obl. humble Servant

"Tho: Hearne.

"Edm. Hall

"Oxford Nov.

"25. Frid. 1725.*

This was followed up some time subsequently by the next:—

"Dear Sir,

"Notwithstanding I have printed the old Table, hanging in the Hospital of Abbington, yet I shall be glad of an opportunity of seeing your Extracts from the Leiger-Book, there being, it may be, something remarkable in them, that may have escaped me.

* *MS. Lansdown*, 778, n. 16.

"I know not what occasion I ever shall have for your MS. life of S^t^. Dunstan, the mention of such things happening to me very often when I am not aware. I wish you would examine Surius and Papebrochius and Bollandus, as well as our own Writers, and try whether there be any Thing momentous that does not occur there. I have not an opportunity of doing it my self.

"I thank you for inspecting the Cotton MS. 'Tis strange to me, that there should be so very little left upon Record about Michelney Abbey. Neither Mr. Dodsworth nor Sir Wm. Dugdale met with any particulars, as far as I can learn, of consequence concerning it. And yet 'twas a very old Abbey, and is mentioned as a Mitred Abbey, tho' not as one of the Parliamentary stated ones. K. Ina, as Leland notes, is said by some to have been Founder, tho' others, as Leland observes, tell us (and that, I think, more truly) that K. Æthelstan founded it. Æl-fred the Great built the Church, as is likewise noted by Leland.

"I thank you for your Notes from Sir Thomas Sebright's Catalogue. But I am inclined to think, that this Catalogue contains only such Books as belong'd to Sir Roger Twisden, and it may be 'tis the very same with what I saw many Years ago, even before Sir Thomas Sebright had bought them. Since that, Sir Thomas purchas'd Mr. Badger's Books, as also the MSS. of Mr. Edward Lhuyd. I looked over Mr. Badger's Study during Mr. Badger's Life, but there was very little or nothing to my purpose. I also looked over Mr. Lhuyd's old MSS., as I did likewise many of his own writing, tho' I think several of Mr. Lhuyd's Papers were not among those MSS. when I had the View of them.

"I hear there is an honorary Monument erected in

Westminster Abbey, to the Memory of the late Dr. Grabe. I wish I had the Inscription.

"I am, Dear Sir,

"Your most obliged humble Servant

"Tho. Hearne.

"Edm. Hall
"Oxford Dec. 20.
"1726.
"We lately drank your health
with the Token you sent. I fre-
quently drink it my self. But
when will you be here again?" *

I have thought proper to furnish complete copies of these two letters, not only with a view of illustrating the history of Muchelney, but also of enriching my memoir with the hitherto unpublished compositions of one to whom every English archæologist is under such special obligation—an antiquary so well known and a scholar so unwearied as Thomas Hearne.

The subject of the Visitation of Monasteries is involved in considerable obscurity. Whether it was systematic or of uncertain occurrence, we have no positive knowledge. Some accounts would lead us to suppose that official investigations into the state of the monasteries were ordinarily made, and at certain intervals; while others can hardly be reconciled with such a supposition, and incline us to think that the examinations in question were instituted as complaints arose of particular and local irregularities. The Benedictines assembled at Oxford in general chapter, in the year 1249; and one result of their meeting appears to have been the appointment of certain Visitors, who should investigate and correct abuses. By the rules which were then

* *MS. Lansdown*, 778, n. 23.

made, the Visitors were to be respectfully lodged and entertained, all questions which they proposed were to be faithfully answered, and their office was to be regarded as pre-eminently distinguished. On their parts they were most strictly enjoined to discountenance all undue expenditure on their account, to act in their examination with all moderation and kindness, and to cherish a solemn sense of their responsibility, so that they might receive of God a worthy reward of their labours. Notwithstanding these excellent and considerate regulations, we have abundant proof that the visitations were oftentimes conducted with the greatest severity, and that the conduct of the inquisitors not unfrequently prevented the attainment of the object which was professedly in view. The troubled community set itself against the troubler, and sometimes mastered him. In the *Monumenta Franciscana*, just published, there is an account of the afflictions endured by the Houses of that order through the visitation of a certain brother Wygmundus, a great friend of Cardinal Otho, at that time the legate in England. He looked so sharply, as it appears, into the affairs of his brethren, and behaved with such intolerable arrogance, that the communities rose in open rebellion and put their persecutor in righteous alarm. He was obliged to quit the field of his exploits, and in undisguised fright to betake himself, having done his work, to his native Germany, carrying the engine of his torture with him, "omnibus turbatis, turbatus et ipse non modicum, rediit in Alemanniam, secum habens seriem suæ visitationis." The whole affair recals to our mind the story told by Matthew Paris, of the troubles of an official of the Archbishop of Canterbury, a certain Master Eustace de Len, who was pounced upon, much to his disgust and astonishment, just as he was sitting down to dinner, and put

to ignominious flight, by the servants of the Bishop of Winchester, for opposing the presentation of a favoured ecclesiastic to the Hospital of S. Thomas, in Southwark. The unhappy official, after suffering some further indignities, was driven away like a criminal, heartily rejoiced that he had escaped from their crooked and hooked hands, "quod manus aduncas et hamatas evasisset," and without ever daring to look behind him, lest he should suffer the doom of Lot's wife. Although an old man, he flew away like a bird, "licet senex avolavit," to Waverley Abbey, causing no little wonderment to the good monks that welcomed him there, and not able to draw breath freely till some comfort had been administered to him! *

It is probable that for some time subsequent to the chapter to which I have referred, other chapters and the Visitations which they decreed were holden at regular intervals. But I see no reason to suppose that this state of things was of long continuance ; for in the episcopal registers mention is made of Visitations being ordered in the instance of particular Houses, which would not seem to harmonize with the fact of such examinations being general. For example, and that strictly connected with our present locality, there is, in *Harl. MS.* 6964, p. 28, being extracts from the register of Bishop John de Drokensford, previously quoted, the following entry :—

"6 Id. Iul. 1315. Commissio facta mag'ris Tho'e de Dilitone, S. T. D. & Ric'o de Forde, juris canon. professori, ad visitand. Abbatiam de Mochelney & conv."

This would hardly have been the case if such investigations had been of periodical and regular occurrence.

The Benedictine Articles of Visitation which have come down to us may be allowed to be not a little inquisitorial,

* Matt. Paris, sub ann. 1252, ed. Wats, fol., Lond., 1684, p. 739.

and capable, in the hands of an unfriendly Visitor, of being made an engine of insufferable tyranny. Of course it must not be forgotten that religious societies were bound by vows to the observance of a strict and strictly-defined rule, and consequently it would not be fair to judge them with the same leniency as would be accorded to men who were not so circumscribed. Yet, on the other hand, it is well to recollect the real and actual state of the case, and to examine the matter with unprejudiced minds. A Benedictine Abbey in the middle ages was a society of highly-educated and, oftentimes, nobly-born men—a centre of religion, sociability, and mental cultivation. Hospitality was a virtue professed and practiced; home duties constituted the employment of the day; learned leisure alternated with devotion, and rigid asceticism was neither proposed for constant observance, nor accepted as an ordinary habit of life. I deny not that this state of things was against the animus and spirit of the rule; but, notwithstanding this fact, it will not appear, to the present age at least, deserving of very grave condemnation. The refectory and cloister of a Benedictine House were a mediæval form of the hall and common-room of our present colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, or of a metropolitan club or learned fraternity. The atmosphere was in general calm and gentlemanlike, the intercourse was polished, the society thoroughly respectable. And yet in several matters—celibacy for instance, and community of possession—there was a broad line which separated such brotherhoods from the world that surrounded them. Their world lay within the precincts of their House; and in this retreat could no doubt be found men of all powers, tempers, and physical peculiarities. Grave and gay, studious and easy, chatty and reserved, solemn and jocose, strong and weak, here found a common home. To suppose any other

state of things would betray an ignorance of human nature. While Brother Johannes de Taunton would be illuminating a hymnal, Brother Walterus Mapes would be indulging himself and eliciting peals of unaffected mirth with one of his satirical songs, and Brother Anselmus de Muchelney would be absorbed in meditation on some thoughtful sentence of S. Augustine or S. Ambrose, or tasking his acumen with some logical puzzle of Aquinas or Occam. There were no newspapers, no "special correspondent from the seat of war," no electric telegraph, in those old days; and accordingly you might have found, as often as opportunity allowed, a circle of attentive ears round some visitor from the court or beyond sea, with piquant accounts of moving incidents, battles with the infidels, or the transcendant glories of some wonder-working shrine. When there was a lack of gossip of this kind, there was plenty of talk about the internal affairs of the House itself. In the company of that most charming of chroniclers, Jocelin of Brakelond, we can mingle with the groups that saunter along the cloister, and catch the whispers of the conventual critics. "That brother is good, and a good clerk, fit to be Abbat," says one. "From good clerks kind heaven deliver us!" replies another. "How can an unlearned man," says a third, "deliver a sermon in chapter, or preach to the people on holidays, or attain to the knowledge of binding and loosing? For the cure of souls is the art of arts and the science of sciences. Heaven forbid that a dumb statue should be set up among us!" "That man has more brains than all of us put together," urges a fourth; "strict in discipline, profound, and eloquent, and of a comely stature." "What if he do excel?" quoth another; "he is too scornful and too reserved." "Better that than one slow of speech," it is retorted; "one that has paste or malt in his

mouth when called upon to speak." "If we wait for one who is above disparagement," says a peacemaker, "we shall never find such an one, for no man living is without fault."

Imagine that to a House thus constituted a Visitation should be ordered. I have said that the articles of examination were severe and inquisitorial. Here are a few of them. Inquiry is to be made whether strict obedience is rendered by and to all the officers; whether silence is preserved in the cloister and at table; whether all eat together in the refectory, and all sleep in one common dormitory; whether there is reading aloud during meals; whether they constantly wear the monastic habit; whether the fasts are duly observed; whether chapters are frequent; whether the house has any debts; whether anything belonging to the house is pledged; whether Divine Service is regular and punctual; whether any suspected persons or such like are allowed to enter within the precincts. Then the inquiry becomes still more particular. Questions are asked touching each officer and member of the society in turn—the abbat, prior, sacrist, chamberlain, cellarer, &c. It proceeds: "Item, si aliquid emendandum, corrigendum, vel reformandum, in A. Item si in B. Item si in C. Et sic de omnibus aliis monachis sigillatim." Pretty sharp scrutinizing this! Pretty opportunity, too, for envy and detraction, which can never be entirely obliterated from human society, to work their evil will. And, lest aught should inadvertently be forgotten, the articles conclude with the expansive corollary: "Item, si sint ibi aliqua alia reformanda"—"Also, if there be any other matters there that need reformation!"

How would such Articles of Visitation be relished in the present state of university or club society? What would

you think of them, Dr. A? And what would you say to them, Reverend Professor B? And, as for the Dean C, the Bursar D, or even the Senior Proctor E himself, fond of chat at the hall table, a quiet party in the common room, with occasional assemblies of neighbours and lady friends inside his own "oak,"—how would they be likely to regard such an investigation? Let us run over the list of our friends in London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and imagine their returns to this stringent series! Without offence, I believe that their judgment of such an infliction would not present many points of difference from that of the Franciscans before referred to, when smarting under the severities of Brother Wygmundus. What the penitentiary Arnulf said to the Pope about it these excellent gentlemen would be likely to endorse: "Si Diabolus fuisset incarnatus, non invenisset subtiliorem et fortiorem laqueum ad illaqueandas animas, quam fuit illa visitatio"—"The very devil incarnate could not have invented a more subtle and effective snare for the snaring of souls than was that visitation!"

A place now for two documents. What has been already said may perhaps furnish us with some notion of the reception given to them. The first consists of a judgment of Bishop Radulphus de Salopia, in the year 1335, in reference to the report of a previous Visitation:

"Injunctiones d'ni epi in visitac'oe sua, ad Abbate' & Conv. de Muchelney.

"Nup' comp'imus q'd aliqui monachi domus v're, qui secundu' canonica instituta vili supellectili deberent esse contenti, aliis f'ribus difformiter conversantes in refectorio, vasis preciosis & splendidis in suis refectionibus abutuntur. Alij quibus, ex ordinis proprio, exilia tuguria sufficere poterant & deberent, lectos seu cubilia in co'i dormitorio ad modum tabernaculi seu vestibuli sibi fieri faciunt, & orna-

tiorem aliis sibi in hujus^di perp'am apparatu'. Alij privatum secessum, singulares commessac'oes, seu aliam lasciviam indiscrete nimium affectantes, ad refectionem in refectorio, prout exposcit monachalis professio, non accedunt. Alij solivagi p' itinera campos & rura equitant & discurrunt.

"Item extitit in n'ra visitac'oe detectu', q'd viri seculares, sine delectu, ac mulieres ac puelle septa claustri & refectorij v'ri mon. sepius & impudenter subintrant.

"Prohibemus &c. Dat. apud Banewell, 6 Id. Jul. 1335."*

Translated it is as follows:

"Injunctions of the Lord Bishop in his Visitation, to the Abbat and Convent of Muchelney.

"We have lately discovered that certain monks of your House, who, according to canonical rule, ought to be content with cheap utensils, acting unlike the rest of the brethren in the refectory, presume to use costly and rich vessels in their repasts. Others, whom, by the rule of their order, small cots might and ought to suffice, cause to be made for themselves couches or beds in the common dormitory, after the similitude of a tent or porch, and the like silly furniture more ornamental than the rest. Others, without discretion, too much affecting private retirement, separate meals, or other wantonness, do not come to repast in the refectory, as the profession of a monk demands. Others, wandering alone, ride about and disport themselves through the highways, plains, and fields.

"It has been also clearly laid open in our Visitation that secular men, without discrimination, and women and girls too frequently and without shame enter surreptitiously the precincts of the cloister and refectory of your monastery.

"We forbid, &c. Dated at Banwell, July 10, 1335."

* *MSS. Harl.* 6965, pp. 87, 88.

The second is a very noble letter, possibly relating to the same Visitation, addressed by some Bishop of Bath to his brother, the Abbat of Muchelney. It is preserved in No. 431, f. 31, of the *Harleian MSS.* in the British Museum, and has never been published. I have, accordingly, given it exactly as it stands, together with perhaps too literal a translation. There is, unfortunately, no name of the writer, nor date; so that, although it may be presumed to be of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, complete identification of it with any particular bishop is as yet impossible. But it is a model in its way of calm, temperate, and dignified expostulation:—

"L'ra domini Bathon' Ep'i directa domino Abbati de Michelney, sue dioc', qui se nimis diu absentans a Monasterio suo, &c'. vt redeat & ib'm resideat, &c.

"Amice carissime, Bonus pastor & pater Abbas ille merito designat' ex noi'e, euj' opus m'itoriu' tanto no'i realiter exhibit se conforme. Nec ad paterni seu pastoralis honoris apicem illum credim' condignis meritis sublimatu', qui, negleeto com'issi gregis regi'e, aut suor' in x'po filior' disciplina conniuentib' oculis pretermissa, curam suam deserens & ad libitu' evagans aliunde latitat emin' in occulto, vbi nec p'ris castigantis facies austera filios terreat insolentes, nec voeem pastoris absentis audire poterit grex oberrans. Presertim cum in prelato p'uido non sit vox seu doctrina viuaeior q' efficax exemplum boni op'is suadens & docens factibile. Du' t'n bene op'ando palam faciat suadibile quod docet'. Presentis itaq' huius n'ri p'hemij misteriu', si forsan vera sint que de vob' audiuim', v're negligencie nimiru' in parte veraeiter applicam'. Quidam e'm confratru' v'ror' quor' vos dum seorsu' a monasterio v'ro in abditis habitantes curam geritis non curantes. Hij more v'ro honestis finib' claustralib' non contenti, quin uerius v'ra sequentes

vestigia, tanq' grex abductus pastoris oberrantis exemplo, a claustro ad non clausa sepi' exilire, licencia non obtenta, vobis absentib', non verentes, velut mures absente mureligo debacantes, obedi'e laxatis habenis palam saliunt in plateis, ac mundanis tumultib' se publice immiscentes, ymo et quod det'ius est ne dicam' p'stibula, ymo locor' latibula suspector' frequenti' subintrantes, cont' sui status decenciam & sancte religionis regularem obseruanciam, inter laicos ut laici vitam ducunt vt asserit' mirabiliter dissolutam. Ne dum semetip'os & religionem ip'am, q'n uerius p'sonam v'ram, quod dolenter referim', non immerito, diffamantes, dum ob defectum sanioris reg'is excessus quoscu'q' v'ri gregis indomiti tuta pastoris custodia destituti v're negligencie totaliter imponit obloquens totum vulgus, sinistra nimiru' suspicans de p'sona v'ra, p' eo q'd vos campum diligit' plus q' claustrum, publice p'clamans deteriora in quadruplo q' forsitan vos audistis. An non creditis, carissime, facti evidencia realiter hoc exp'ti, q'd nos visitac'oem n'ram ordinariam domus v're hacten' benigno favore distulim', de v'ri regiminis industria sanioris & conf'r'm v'ror' s'ca conu'sacione specialius pre ceteris confidentes, ac eciam veraciter opinantes, ac si loco tam honesto opus correccione aliqua non fuisset? Sed ecce vbi prius putabat' honestioris conuersacionis s'citas vberi' pululasse, jam major sup'est inopinata necessitas graviores excessus delinquenciu' seuerius corrigendi. Nec dubiu' quin v'ra aberrante grege v'ro absencia & correcco'is debite v'ra neglige's dilacio totaliter est in causa, nec absq' v'ro p'iculo s'mne formidando credatis. Sacerdos c'm Heli, quia dudum neglex'at filios corrip'e transgessores, confractis cervicib' corruit, sicut satis flagello p'cussus vindici terribilis interitus repentini. Quocirca, carissime, ne forsan pastoris absentis negligencia vobismet ip'is & erranti gregi occasio sit ruine, necnon vt religionis

honestas ab hac hora in antea honesti' obseruet', ne de p'sona v'ra obloquens suspicio vbilibet deleat', vobis in virtute sancte obedi'e ac sub pena status v'ri firmiter iniungendo mandam', qua'ti' a locis illis campestrib' ignominioso fetore suspicionis sinistre non carentib' ad monasteriu' v'r'm suavissi'e contemplacionis florib' redolens & amenu' visis presentib' reu'tamini, infra decendiu' a temp'e recepcionis p'senciu', absq' mora inibi p'ut tenemini de cetero residentes. Vt conf'r'm v'ror' insolencias, de quib' hijs diebus laborat in partibus plus solito pu^ca vox & fama, amodo purificet integritas vite v're; ac mor' v'ror' maturitas tanq' luc'na sup' candelabru' posita taliter de cetero fulgeat & claresc at, vt lux v'ra cora' ho'ib' clare lucens tam verbo q'm op'e honestioris conuersaco'is exemplum eisd'm v'ris conf'rib' vndiq' subministret: ne forsitan in futuru' al' cont' vos hijs n'ris l'ris amicabilit' premunitos, v'ris culpa & mora p'cedentib', nob' det' occasio seueri' p'cedendi. In d'no valeat'. Sc'pt' &c." *

Translated, it may stand in English as follows:

"A letter of the Lord Bishop of Bath, addressed to the Lord Abbat of Muchelney, of his diocese, too long absenting himself from his monastery, commanding him to return, and there reside, &c.

"Dearest friend,—He is deservedly named a good shepherd and father Abbat whose meritorious work really exhibits itself conformable to so great a name. Nor do we hold him to be deservedly elevated to the summit of paternal or pastoral honour, who, neglecting the government of the flock committed to him, or forgetfully winking at the discipline of his sons in Christ, forsaking his own cure and at his fancy roving out of the way, lurks afar off in secret, where neither the grave face of a correcting father can

* *MSS. Harl.* 431, f. 31.

strike alarm into unruly sons, nor the wandering flock can hear the voice of the absent shepherd. Especially, since in a wise prelate there is no word nor doctrine more potent than a vigorous example of good work, advising and teaching the practicable; while at the same time, by well working, it manifestly practises the advisable that is taught. The secret, then, of this our present preface —if perchance those reports are true which we have heard of you—to remove doubt in part we truly refer to your negligence. For there are certain of your confraternity of whom, while you live in unknown places, apart from your monastery, you take no oversight. These, after your manner, not content with the honourable bounds of the cloister, but rather following your footsteps, as a flock led away by the example of a wandering shepherd, not fearing too frequently to wander from the safe cloister to the unsafe world, without license, yourself being absent, like mice that play while the mouser is away, the reins of restraint loosened, disport themselves in the highways, and mixing themselves up publicly with worldly confusions—yea, and what is worse, we grieve to add, too frequently entering houses of indifferent report, yea secret and suspected places, in opposition to what becomes their position, and the observance according to their rule of our holy religion—spend as laics among laymen, as it is asserted, a life of marvellous dissoluteness. Not to speak of their spreading an evil report of themselves and their religion it self—nay, more truly of your own character, not undeservedly, as we grieve to report—whilst, through the lack of a more sound discipline, the entire populace in severe terms lays the whole blame of all the evil deeds of your unrestrained flock, deprived of the safe keeping of the shepherd, to your negligence; indulging truly in sinister surmises re-

specting your own character, for that you are fonder of the plain than you are of the cloister; publicly asserting that there are worse things four times over than perhaps you have heard. Do you not believe, dearest brother, this by the evidence of fact clearly proved, that up to this time we have delayed our ordinary visitation of your house with kindly favour, having particular confidence in respect of the more perfect observance of your rule, and of the good conversation of your brethren, and also truly supposing, as if there had not been in a place so excellent a need of any correction? But, behold, where first it was thought that the seeds of more honest conversation were abundantly shooting forth, there now remains a greater unexpected necessity of more severely correcting the too-grievous excesses of delinquents! Nor is it doubtful but that with your wandering flock your own absence and negligent delay of rightful correction is entirely the cause of the wrong; nor can you believe it to be destitute of the most dreadful peril in your own regard. For Eli the priest, because for a long while he had neglected to correct his transgressing sons, fell and brake his neck, struck, as it were, with an avenging lash of terrible sudden death. Wherefore, dearly beloved, lest perchance the negligence of the absent shepherd should be an occasion of ruin both to yourself and your wandering flock, and also that the honour of religion may from this hour, as before, be more honourably observed; also that the reproachful suspicion in reference to your own character may on all sides be removed, we strictly enjoin and command you, by virtue of your religious obedience, and on pain of your state, that you do return, with as little delay as possible after the sight of these presents, from those outlying places, laden with the disgraceful fetor of injurious suspicion, to your own monastery, redolent

and delightful with the flowers of most sweet contemplation, within ten days from the time of receiving these presents, and without delay there continuing to reside for the future, as you are by rule bound to do. So that the irregularities of your brethren, concerning which at this time in various places the public voice and fame is more than customarily employed, the integrity of your own life may from this time reform: and that the perfection of your morals, as a candle set upon a candlestick, may so, for the future, glow and be bright, that your light clearly shining before men, as well by word as by deed, may furnish an example of more honest conversation to the same your brethren on all sides; lest, perchance, otherwise, at a future time, against you whom we have amicably forewarned by these our letters, through your increasing fault and delay, occasion be given to us of proceeding with greater severity. Fare ye well in the Lord."

The effect of this epistle is not known. Whether, indeed, there was any real foundation for the charges thus conveyed is by no means certain. It might, after all, as I hinted previously, have been the result of some jealous neighbour, such as we know it was the ill fortune of Muchelney to possess. Nor would it be fair to take an isolated instance of wrong, even could it be clearly proved to have existed, and to set it against many centuries of excellence, and many generations of blameless men. Besides all this, I must not forget to add, that, granting the bishop's interference to have been founded on strict principles of justice, two conclusions are imperatively forced upon us, each of them opposed to modern views on the subject of the Religious Houses, and such as are proof positive that those views are erroneous. First, that the

rarity of such documents may be taken to demonstrate the infrequency of conduct which would necessitate them; and, secondly, that, when such conduct did occur, it was by no means winked at by those in authority, but faithfully exposed, fearlessly condemned, and summarily punished.

Let us now, in conclusion, examine rather more minutely the peculiarities of the lovely scene on which we have been gazing in imagination, during our retrospect of its fortunes and our musings on its fate. The buildings were both extensive and magnificent. William of Worcester, in his *Itinerary*, describes the church as measuring 104 of his steps in length, and 30 in breadth: the chapel of the Virgin Mary he notices, but the measurements are wanting. The length of the cloister, he says, was 54 of his steps, and the breadth of similar extent. From some edifices elsewhere remaining, whose dimensions he records, we learn that the worthy traveller's "step" was not more than a space of two feet, in some instances not more than a foot and a half! We may, therefore, allow to the church a length of about two hundred, and a breadth of about fifty-five feet; and to the cloister an equal length and breadth of one hundred feet. The greater part of the structure appears to have been speedily demolished, although the foundations to a considerable extent may yet be traced, and indicate the existence of a large and wealthy establishment. I am indebted to my friend Mr. A. A. Clarke for an accurate ground-plan, after J. Buckler, of the most important of these remains (Plate I). Little of the edifice itself is now visible, save those beautiful portions to which I alluded at the commencement of my memoir, erected a very few years prior to the final catastrophe. They consist of a few rooms, belonging, it may be, to the Abbat's lodgings, and of the north side of the cloisters (Plate II).

The former are similar to the usual domestic edifices of the period of their construction, and have windows and doors with square heads and plain mouldings. Several of these windows, however, are very elegant, and have quatrefoils in their spandrils, and here and there still retain a few fragments of their original glazing. One of the rooms on the first floor possesses some ornamental details in stone and wood of considerable excellence (Plate III). The cloister is, perhaps, a little earlier, but also of the late Perpendicular period, and is entirely covered on its south aspect, which is supposed to have formed a side of the refectory, with cusped and otherwise ornamented panel-work; while on the north front, that towards the court, the remains of several windows are yet apparent (Plate IV), some built up for the purpose of converting the cloister into a cellar, and one or two still exhibiting portions of the tracery that once adorned them, now, however, doing little more than declaring the excellence of that which has been ruthlessly destroyed.

There, as I saw it on that bright morning in June, it lay in stillness and sweetness; and every stone seemed to whisper, notwithstanding all that had been done to it, of truth and peace. At some moments, indeed, the breeze seemed to be laden with a sound of wailing:—"Deus, venerunt gentes in hæreditatem Tuam; polluerunt templum sanctum Tuum: comederunt Jacob, et locum ejus desolaverunt." But, more powerful even than that was the hopeful strain of faith and patience, as though the peace that was once invoked upon the place still availed, like Charity, to bear all things and overcome evil with good:—"Quam dilecta tabernacula Tua, Domine virtutum! Concupiscit et deficit anima mea in atria Domini: quia melior est dies una in atriis Tuis, super millia." Man had done all but his worst, and yet

there was that which mocked his efforts. Hour after hour rolled away, but there was no satiety, nothing of the pain which too many works of modern hands inflict upon wayfarers; no sense of disappointment, annoyance, weariness and chagrin. True, there was dilapidation of the completest kind. It required the knowledge of one who had oftentimes been a pilgrim to sacred Places where the footsteps of the spoiler are less apparent, duly to appreciate many of the still remaining evidences of ancient possession, and even partially and imperfectly to picture the scene as it was exhibited to the gaze of its olden tenants. None but eyes so instructed could trace the few and usually obscure indications of edifices which had been either long since levelled with the ground, or altered, when still preserved, for uses most widely contrasting with those originally designed. And yet, no observer could possibly be insensible to the charm that so sweetly characterizes every detail of the old structure, and so unmistakeably reveals the power which imparted to it life. An exquisite air of grace is over the whole that indicates the presence of a master hand, the pervading influence of consummate taste, and of a mind in which beauty was an inherent and inalienable ingredient. Go where you will, it is the same in every instance. There is in these edifices something unapproachable, almost indescribable—something for heart to revel in and for soul to kindle at, rather than for tongue to discuss and for pen to delineate. One cannot look at such buildings without loving them. They are themselves kindly, and they elicit corresponding feelings. As I bent my steps homeward on the evening of the day to which I have referred, I seemed to be parting with an old and dearly loved friend. I turned again and again to catch another and yet another look ; and, despite of the

mutilation and the ruin, tried to people the spot once more with its former tenants, to drink in the melody that then made the place vocal, and to mix with the refined and refining company that there found a holy home. A few steps further, and the white summer mist from the vast level on every side hid all from my view. Time and nature thus acted in concert, and the one completed what the other had begun. The physical, too, symbolized the moral. A cloud lies between us and Muchelney Abbey, which the morn only of a brighter than earthly day, making innocence as clear as the light and just dealing as the sun, shall at the time of retribution disperse and annihilate. Then, if not before, its good shall be made manifest, its blessedness shall appear, "the day at length shall break, and the shadows shall flee away" for ever.

THOMAS HUGO.

APPENDIX.

I reserve for an Appendix those of Dr. Hutton's Extracts from the Wells Registers which have reference to the Abbey of Muchelney. They were made from the originals by their learned transcriber in and about the year 1686, and are contained in five closely-written volumes, numbered 6964—6968 inclusive, of the *Harleian* Manuscripts in the British Museum. I have constantly referred to them and several times quoted them in the foregoing pages, and hardly need add that their importance and value cannot be over-rated.

The first four of these volumes furnish us with a series of extracts from the Registers of various Bishops from the year 1309 to 1645. They are occasionally defective in chronological arrangement, a few leaves of the originals having been misplaced through the ignorance or carelessness of the binders of subsequent times. These inaccuracies, however, admit of easy rectification. The fifth volume, No. 6968, contains extracts "e registro cartarum penes Dec. & Capl'm Well.", "ex magno libro Cartarum penes Decan. & Capit'lm Well.", "nomina Ep'orum in Somers." &c., "ex alio Registro penes Dec. & Capl. Well. vocat. the Red booke," and "ex alio registro penes Dec. & Caplm. Well."

It is greatly to be regretted that these most interesting collections are, for the most part, unprovided with in-

dexes, a deficiency which unfortunately is not supplied by another volume (No. 7521) containing tables of reference to several other departments of their compiler's labours. This fact necessitates the careful and laborious perusal of the entire series, the fruits of which, so far as they relate to Muchelney, given with minute exactness from the MSS. in the Museum, are now for the first time committed to the press.

MS. HARL. 6964.

"E Registro Ioh'is de Drokenesford ep'i Bath. Well."

[1309—1329.]

"4 Non. May. 1310. Adam de Ilemenistre ad vicar. de Muchelneye ad pres. Abb. & Conv. ejusd." p. 11.

"4 Id. Feb. 1314. dn's Will. de Bulmere ad vicar. eccl. prebendal. de Ilmister ad coll. ep'i eo q[d] Abbas & conv. de Muchelney presentarunt p'sonam inhabilem." p. 25.

"6 Id. Iul. 1315. commissio facta mag'ris Tho'e de Dilitone, S.T.D. & Ric'o de Forde, juris canon. professori ad visitand Abbatiam de Mochelney & conv." p. 28.

"6 Id. Sep. 1315. dn's ep'us certificat Thesaurar & Barones de Scacc. d'ni regis, quod Abbates Glaston. & Muchelney, ac Priores Taunton & Montisacuti receperunt a d'no Walt'o de Eseudemor milite custode quarundam terraru' Templar. in Com. Somers. 18[l]. 8[s]. pro vadijs Willi. de Warrewyk, Willi de Craueumbe, Ric'i Engaine & Ric'i de Colingham Templar' in dictis monaster' ad penitentiam peragendam deputati viz a die lune prox post festu' sc'e Mar. Magd. anno reg. Edw. 2. sexto usq' 26 Apr. anno eodem pro 276 dieb. ultimo die . . putato & non primo, viz p' diem pro quolibet eorum 4 denar." pp. 28, 29.

"18 Kal. Nov. [1319] d'ns ep'us mittit literas testimoniales Priori hosp. sc'i Ioh. Ierlm in Angl. de f're Willo de Craucomb ordinis quondam militie templi Ierl'm q^{d} p' Abb. & Conv. de Muchelney ad ipsius Will. electionem recipitur ut in coru' monasterio juxta voti sui observantiam & mandati Ap'lici tenorem, d'no suo perpetuo famuletur." p. 44.

"4 Id. Apr. [1313] Ioh. atte Brugg ad vicar ecel. de Muchelney ad pres: Abb. & Conv. ejusd." p. 50.

"Id. Sep. 1317. d'ns ep'us concedit Abb. & Conv. de Muchelney, ut propter es alienu' officiu' Sacristarie p' unu' annum in manus suas recipiant, & de fructibus ejusd' disponere." p. 54.

"Non. Febr. [1317] Ioh. de Henton ad vicar. de Somerton ad pres. Abb. & Conv. Muchelney." p. 58.

"Prid. non Mar. 1325. mag'r Ioh. d'eus de la more de Wamberg ad ecel. de Chipstaple p' mort. ad pres. Abb. & Conv. de Muchelney." p. 102.

"14 Kal. Nov. [1327] Ric. Dygon de Thorny ad vicar. de Fifhide p' resig. Ioh. de Ramesham ad pres. Abb. & Conv. de Muchelney." p. 116.

"Non. Apr. 1328. petitio fr'is Tho'e Heremite in Heremitagio de Och in parochia de Alre nup' ex magna devoco'e ipsius auctoritate n'ra (epi) inclusi, quod eu' a temp'e inclusionis sue nullus eu' visitare seu videre posset quali seu quanta foret infirmitate detentus, ut de licentia & beneplacito n'ro ad augmentum vite & profectum anime sue hostiu' fieret p' quod (alicui) pateret ingressus pro d'eo

incluso in necessitatibus suis visitand, ipsiusq' confessiones audiend absolvend & penitentiam injungend cu' p' ipsius coheremitam fuerit requisitus, ac etiam cu' ab hac luce substractus fuerit, in eccl'ia de Alre vel cimiterio ejusd aut alibi in loco consecrato ubi sepultura' elegerit sepeliri valeat. Nos—huic annuimus gratiose viz. q^d hostium hujusmodi p' visum vicarij ecclie paroch. de Muchelney fiat, & sub firma secura cujus clavis penes dcu' vicariu' remaneat." pp. 120, 121.

"6 Kal. Iul. 1329. Rob. de la Zoe capellanus institutus fuit perpetuus presbiter in libera capella de la Wyke ad pres. Abb. & Conv. Muchelney." p. 142.

The two following entries are misplaced. Dr. Hutton notices the fact:—

"Sunt quedam folia," he says, "pertinentia ad registrum Rad'i de Salopia ep'i B. W. p' errorem in hoc registro consut', que sequuntur." p. 143.

"14 Feb. [1361] Ric. Forst' ad eccl. de Chipstaple p. resig. Will. Wysman ad pres. Abb. & Conv. de Muchelney." p. 144.

"26 Feb. [1361] Will. Bailly ad perpet. cantar. in capella be' mar. de Wyk Perham juxta Lamport p' resig. d'ni Ioh. Rouland. ad pres. Abb. & Conv. Muchelney, hac vice raco'e minor. etat. Nich. fil. & heredis Will. Poulet in manu sua existentis." p. 145.

MS. HARL. 6965.

"quæda' ex Registro Radulphi de Salopia ep'i Bath. & Well." [1329—1363.]

"commissio Waltero de Hulle rectori eccl. de Schepton belli campi ad absolvendu' fr'em Henr. de Estcam'el monachu' de Muchelney ord. sc'i Bened. dat. Lond. 9 Kal. Feb." [1329.] p. 20.

"Commissio facta Tho'e de Retford Cancell. Well. Ioh'i Martel & Laur. de la Barre canon. Well. in negotio provisionis concesse Walt? de Legh paup'i cl'ico de beneficio eccl'iastico spectante ad presentacoe' Abbat. & Convent. de Mochelney ord. sc'i Bened. dat. apud Okestede Non. Aug." [1330.] p. 36.

"4 Non. Sept. [1332] apud Dogmersfeld. certificatoriu' citatoru' ad Conciliu' apud London. Dec. & Capitlu' Well. Prior Bathon. Capitul' Bathon. Prepositus Well. Archid. Well. Archid. Bathon. Archid. Tanton. Abb. Glaston, de Muchelney, de Keynesham, de Athelney. Prior Tanton, de Bruton, & Clerus Bath & Well." p. 62.

"d'ns ep'us concedit licentia' Abbati & Conv. de Muchelney ut unu' corrodiu' sive liberacoe'm Will'o le Iressch domicello possint concedere ad terminu' vite sue dat. apud Banewell 4 Id. Dec." [1332]. p. 67.

"eode' die [14 Kal. Aug. 1334.] Fr. Ioh'es de Somertone Prior eccl. regularis be'orum Aplo'm Petri & Pauli de Muchelney confirmatur Abbas ejusde' loci & munus benedictionis recipit." p. 81.

"Injunctiones d'ni epi" &c. This has been already given, and will be found at pages 99, 100. p. 87.

"1 Apr. 1337. apud Hywysch Nich. de Somerton rect.

eccl. de Kynewarston in obsequijs Abb^tis de Muchelney."
p. 110.

"Penitentia injuncta Ioh'i de Worthy monacho Muchelu. a conventu sequestretur, in camera aliqua sub tuta custodia conservetur, singulis diebus d'nicis & majoribus duplicibus, sicut alij monachi illius mon. in quo ipsu' morari contigerit, diebus vero Martis & Iovis de pane cerevisia legumine & uno genere piscium ministretur, diebus vero Lune Mercur' Veneris & Sabb^ti de pane cerevisia legumine duntaxat sit contentus, singulis festivis & alijs unu' psalteriu' preter horas canonicas—dicere teneatur. dat. 2 Kal. Nov. 1338." p. 125.

"8 Kal. Apr. [1341] Ric. Dygon presbr. admiss. ad vicar. de Muchelney ad pres. Abb. & conv. de Muchelney. m. A. W." p. 148.

"eod' die [8 Kal. Apr. 1341] Ioh. de Kirkada presbr. admiss. ad vicar. de Fifhide vacat. p' resign. Ric. Dygon ad pres. Abb. & Conv. de Muchelney. m. A. T." ib.

"XI Feb. [1343] apud Wyvelesco'b Ric'us Rossedenek presbr. Exon' dioc. collat. ad vicar. de Mochelney ad pres. Abb. & conv. de Mochelney cujus redditus & prove'tus 20 marc. sterl. annua' quantitate' juxta taxaco'em decime non excedunt." p. 165.

"5 Non. Oct. [1345] apud Banewell. Nich'us de Somerton presbr. admiss. ad vicar. de Somerton ad pres. Abb. & Conv. de Mochelney." p. 173.

"2 Id. Mar. [1348] Ioh. de Oxton presb'r. ad vicar. de Ile Abbat ad pres. Abb. & conv. de Muchelney." p. 204.

"d'ns rex assensu' prebet electioni de fr'e Ioh. de Overton in Abbatem de Muchelney. Test. 30 May, regni 23." [1349.] p. 216.

"13 Kal. Mar. 1350. Walt. de la Rode, capellan. ad cantar. in capella sc'i Martini in eccl. Well. ad pres. Abb. & Conv. Muchelney. pro d'co patre, & pro ai'a bone memor. Ioh'is de Somerton nup' Abbatis de Mulchelney & toto conventu ibide' celebrand." p. 223.

"5 Id. Apr. 1350. apud Wyvelesco'b. Universis—Rad's salut.—damus & concedimus Priori Hospitalis Ioh'is civitat. Well. & ejusde' loci confr'ibus in p'petuum o'es redditus proventus terras messuagia & tenementa quecunq' cu' suis pertinentiis universis que de dono seu feoffamento Willi de Luttelton, Willi de Bath, & Willi de Bourwardesleye habuimus seu adquisivimus,—habe'd & tenend eisd Priori & Conf'ribus & succ. suis in perpetun' de capitalibus dn'is feodorn' illorum, reddend inde annuatim servicia debita. Idem Prior & fr'es 6 marc. sterl. cuidam capellano missas pro nobis du' vixerimus & pro ai'a n'ra cu' ab hac luce migraverimus, & ai'a recolende memorie Ioh. de Somerton quondam Abbatis de Muchelney ai'abusq' o'iu succ. suor' & singuloru' de conventu ad altare sc'i Martini in eccl. n'ra Well. in perpetuu' celebraturo, que' quide' capellanum Abbas & Conv. de Muchelney nobis & succ. n'ris presentabunt." pp. 224, 225.

"8 Id. Oct. 1350. apud Evercrich. Petr. Lange de Anebury presbr. ad vicar. de Somerton ad pres. Abb. & Conv. de Muchelney. m. A. W." p. 229.

"12 Kal. Oct. [1352] apud Hychamme, Ioh. Hunte

presbr. ad vicar. eccl. de Vyfhyde p' resign. Ioh. Crukeade ad pres. Tho'e Abbatis & Conv. de Muchelney. m. A. T." p. 249.

Vide plura ad finem Registri Ioh. de Drokensford. p. 143." [6964]. p. 269.

Here may be inserted the extracts already given in this Appendix, at p. 39.

MS. HARL. 6966.

"e registro Hen. Bowet ep'i B. W. incipit 1401." p. 1.

"10 Iul. 1404. Ioh. Abbas de Muchilney q'. q'." p. 3.

"e Registro Nich'i Bubbewyth B. W. ep'i translat ab eccl Sarum. 1407." p. 13.

"no'ia citatoru' ad convocacoe' in eccl. sc'i Paul. Lond. 18 Nov. [1415] Ioh'es Prior Bath. Walt. Medford Decan. Well. Ioh. Abb. Glaston. Ioh. Abb. de Muchelney. Leonardus Abbas de Clyva. Ioh. Abb. de Athelney. Thomas Abbas de Keynesham. Ioh. Prior de Bruton. Thomas Prior Tanton. D'ns Ioh. Ikelyngton Archid^us Well. Rogerus Harewell Arch. Bath. clerus Bath & Well dioc." p. 21.

"26 May. [1410] Mr. Ric. Courtenay Canonic. Well. electus est Decanus Well. & 19 Iun. confirmatus p' d'nu ep'um.

in die electionis

Ioh. Abbas de Muchelneg } non comparentes
Ioh. Abbas de Athelnegh } pronunciati contumaces."
[inter multos alios] } pp. 29, 30.

"e Registro d'ni Ioh'is Stafford B. W. Epi." [1425]. p. 37.

"Cantaria ad altare sc'i Martini in eccl. Cath Well. fundata, pro a'iabus Rad'i de Salopia c'pi B. W. & Ioh'is Somerton Abb'is de Muchelney." [1432]. p. 43.

"Apr. 1438. mandatu' ad interessend concilio Ferrariensi tam propter Orientalis & Occidentalis eccl'iaru unitatem qua' reformacoe' universalis.

nomina citatoru' ad conciliu' Ferrariense
d'ns Nich'us Frome Abbas Glaston
d'ns Ioh. Chierde Abb. Muchelney
d'ns Ioh. Pederton Abb. Athelney
d'ns Davyd Ioyner Abb. Clyva
d'ns Will. Benet Prior Taunton"
[cum aliis.] pp. 49, 50.

"Registrum Tho'e de Bekynton ep'i B. W. qui consecratus fuit * * * 13 Octob. 1443." p. 57.

"12 Iun. [1449] d'ns Tho. Lacok Prior Bathon.
d'ns Ioh. Cherde Abb. de Mochilney.
d'ns David Ioyner Abb. de Clyva.
f'r. Ioh. Henton Prior de Bruton.
d'ns Ioh. Benet Prior de Monte acuto.
f'r. Ric'us Glene Prior de Taunton." } q'. q'. p. 67.

"Prebendarij eccl'ie Well. tempore hujus electionis [sc. Decani, 22 Aug. 1446] fuere
Fr' Ioh. Pederton Abb'. de Athelney
Ioh'es Cherde Abb'. de Muchilney personaliter."
[cum multis aliis.] p. 117.

"Ioh. Cherde Abbas mon. beatoru' Apostoloru' Petri & Pauli de Mochelneye ord. s'ci Bened. obijt x Sept. 1463. & Dominus Tho. Pipe electus est Abbas (licentia d'ni regis prius habita) 20 Sept. confirmatur 3 Octob. mandatu' ad induce'd eu' in preb. de Ilmystr. dat. 13 Octob." p. 120.

"Rob. Stillyngton." [1465.] p. 125.

"20 Mar. [1468] Ioh. Taylour A.M. ad vicar. de Ilemy'str. p' resign mag'ri Ioh. Stokys Canon. Well. ad pres. Abb. & Conv. de Muchelney." p. 126.

"15 Iul. 1474. Ioh. Abb. de Muchelney. q'. q'." p. 132.

"Will. Wytham LL.D. Decan. Well. obijt 16 Iul. 1472. & canonici residentiarij petita & obtenta licentia ab ep'o B.W. ad eligend Decanu' statuunt 18 Dec. prox diem electionis future.

d'ni { Ioh. Bracy } Abb. de Muchelney
{ Rob. Hyll } Abb. de Athelney.

[inter alios] non comparentes pronunciati contumaces." p. 143.

"d'ns Ioh. Bracy Abb. de Mochelney obijt 16 May 1489. & Will. Wik electus unanimiter 15 Iun. pontificat. Innocent. 8. pape. anno sexto." p. 144.

"E Registro Ricardi Fox B.W. epi
a sede Exon' translati anno 1492." p. 145.

"21 Aug. 9 H. 7 [1494] Will. Wykes Abb. de Mochelney & conv. concedu't annua' pensione' 20 marc. Rob. Heby nup' vicariu' de Cherde. durante vita." p. 148.

"E Registro Oliveri Kyng Ep'i Bath. Well. [1496]" p. 151.

"29 Iul. 1498. Ioh. Abbas de Mochilney q'. q'." p. 154.

"cantaria in capella s'ci Martini ad altare s'ci Martini in eccl. Cath. Well. pro a'iabus d'ni Rad'i de Salopia ep'i B.W. & Ioh. de Somerton quondam Abbatis de Mochelney." p. 158.

"Ad electionem Decani. [25 Dec. 1498] hi fuere canonici Well. citati [inter alios]

d'ns Georgius Abb. de Athelney
d'ns Willelmus Abb. de Mochilney." p. 175.

MS. HARL. 6967.

"E Registro Hadriani de Castello. 1504." fol. 3.

"Rog. Churche decr. D^r. Canon. Well. vicar. general dat commissionem Ioh. Bekham decr. bac. ad supervidend statu' Abb. de Mochelney temp'e vacaco'is p' mort Will'i Wyke ultimi Abbatis. dat 24 Oct. 1504." f. 3.

"6 Feb. [1504] Tho. Broke Abbas de Muchelney installatur preb. de Ilmystr ab antiquo debit' isto Abbati." f. 3b.

"20 Ian. [1505] d'ns Tho. Rowcetor ad eccl. de Chipstaple p' resig. d'ni Ric'i Meryman ad pres. Tho. Abb. de Mochilney & Convct. Solv. ann pens. 4 libr. resignanti." f. 5b.

"15 Iul. [1508] d'ns Will. Scott ad vicar. de Fyfehede p' resig. d'ni Will. Ionys ad pres. Tho. Abb. de Mochilney & Conv. solvend ann. pens. 50^s. resignanti." f.9b.

"11 Aug. [1508] d'ns Ric. Stabylle ad vicar. de Mochilney p' mort. d'ni Ioh. Yonge ad pres. Tho. Abb. de Mochilney & conv." f. 9b.

"Nomina citatoru' ad convoca'oem [1509] sunt
D'ns Ric. Beer Abbas. Glaston
D'ns Tho. Broke Abbas de Mochilney
D'ns Ioh. Wellyngton Abbas de Athelney
D'ns Ioh. Peynter Abbas de Clyva
Dn's Ioh. Prows Prior de Taunton
Mr. Polydorus Vergilius Archid. Well.
Mr. Rob. Honywodd Archid. Taunton." [cum aliis]
f. 12, 12b.

"18 Ian. [1509] d'ns Will. Drewe ad cant. perp. ad altare s'ci Martini in eccl. cath. Well. (pro a'iab. Rad. de Salopia & Ioh. de Somerton) p' mort. d'ni Ioh. Teel ad pres. Tho. Abb. de Mochilney." f. 14.

"eod. die [3 May, 1511] d'ns Ioh. Mawnfeld ad vicar. de Somerton p' mort. d'ni Ioh. Preston ad pres. Tho. Abb. de Mochilney & conv." f. 14b.

"24 Aug. [1512] d'ns Nich. Gillet ad vicar. de Mochelney p' resig. d'ni Ric. Staple ad pres. Tho. Abb. de Mochelney & conv." f. 17.

"Nomina citatoru' ad convocacoem [1514]
D'ns Ric. Beer Abb. Glaston
D'ns Tho. Broke Abb. de Mochelney
D'ns Ioh. Wellyngton Abb. de Athelney
D'ns Will. Dovell Abb. de Clyva
D'ns Nich'us Peper Prior Taunton." [cum aliis]
f. 19b.

"Novum mandatu' pro convocac'oe cleri. 1515.
nomina citatoru' [Abbat. Mucheln. & Atheln.] ut
antea." f. 21.

"23 Mar. [1515] d'ns Ioh. Wennysley ad vicar. de Ilmystr. p' mort d'ni Ioh. Taylour ad pres. Abb. & Conv. de Mochilney." f. 22 b.

"21 Ian. 1504 Tho. Broke Abb. de Mochilney confirmatur, p' mort. d'ni Will. Wyk" f. 24.

"E Registro Thome Wuley" [1518] f. 25.

"26 Mar. 1520. Ioh. Wyche jur. bac. ad cantar. perpet. altaris s'ci Martini in eccl. Cath. Well. pro aiabus Rad. de Salopia ep'i B.W. & Ioh. de Somerton olim Abbat. de Mochelney fundat. vacant. p' resign. Will'i Bowreman ad pres. Abb. & Conv. de Mochelney." f. 28.

"9 Jan. [1520] d'ns Ioh. Stacy ad vicar. de Meryet p' mort. d'ni Will. Marten ad pres. Abb. & Conv. de Muchelney m. A.T." f. 29.

"5 Sep. [1521] Ioh. Dybell LLB. ad cantar. perpet. altaris s'ci Martini in eccl. Well. p' mort. mag'ri Ioh. Wyche ad pres. Abb. & Conv. de Muchelney." f. 29b.

"6 Nov. [1522] Ioh. Shirborn confirmatur Abbas de Mochilney p' mort. d'ni Tho. Broke. mandatu' est decano Well. aut subdecano aut presidenti capit'li Well. ad admittend eum in prebendariu' de Imestria jure de'i monasterij." f. 31.

"27 Apr. [1525.] Hen. Kyle, A.M. ad vicar. de Ile Abbatis p' resig. d'ni Ioh. Hayne ad pres. Abb. & Conv. Mochelney. m. A.T." f. 37.

"10 Sep. [1526] d'ns Rob. Noke ad vicar. de Ilmister p' resig. Ioh. Wennesley ad pres. Abb. & Conv. Mochelney, solvend ann. pens. 20 marc. resignanti. m. dec. Well. ad induc." f. 38b.

"E registro Ioh. Clerke Ep'i Bath. Well. quod incipit 12 May 1523." f. 42.

"3 Aug. [1533] d'ns Ioh. Paslewe ad vicar. de Abbats yle p' resign. d'ni Hen. Kyle ad pres. Tho. Ive Abbatis de Mochelney & conv." f. 46.

"E Registro Will'i Knyght Ep'i Bath. Well. quod incipit 29 May. 1541. Hen. 8. an. 33." f. 49.

"1 Oct. [1544] Tho. Lock cl'icus ad prebenda' de Ilmyster ad pres. Edw. Comitis Hertford." f. 53b.

"15 Aug. [1546] Will. Rodberd A.M. ad vicar de Somerton p' mort' d'ni Cuthb. Hillacre ad pres. Edw. Com^{tis} Hertford magni Camerarij Angl." f. 55b.

These two concluding extracts mark the commencement of the new regime. Edward, Earl of Hertford, was, as I have already stated, Henry the Eighth's grantee; and henceforth the name of the Abbat & Convent of Muchelney occurs no more.

MS. HARL. 6968.

"e Registro cartarum penes Dec. & Capl'm Well." p. 1.

"Rob. Bath. eccl'ie minister [1135—1166] salut.—Hywis in Brentemaresco quedam terre portiuncula que hida vulgo dicitur membru' monerij n'ri de Banewella ab antiquis fuisse dignoscitur. hec—predecessoru' n'rorum presulu' beneficio in plurium tam laicoru' quam cl'icoru' translata est potestatem & possessionem de quorum numero mag'rm Walt. de Moretania fuisse recordamur, quem eandem Hywis possidentem invenimus eum ad Ep'atum vocati fuissemus, post quem mag'r Aluredus ex dono n'ro, deinde mag'r Ric. de Monteacut eam nihilominus optinere meruerunt. Et quoniam vidimus & audivimus prefata' Hywis in plurimoru'—absq' certo titulo cessisse potestatem & possessionem, metuentes ne ob hanc causam premente forsan potenter petico'e, seu n'ra q^{d} absit vel succ. n'rorum ep'orum minus provida deliberaco'e transferretur in jus & rem perpetuam laicorum, maluimus eam divino juri penitus mancipari, & nequaquam illam a mensa d'ni sequestrari vel alienari. Proinde—instituimus prescriptam Hywis in perpetua' prebendam eccli'e d'i & b'i Andree de Well cu' universis pertin.——2 Non Nov. 1159. ep'atus n'ri 24. Assentientibus ac petentibus Ivone Decano & Convent Canonicoru' Well. Petro Priore & Conv. Bathon. Alano Abbate Mucheln. Bened'co Abbate Adhalighen. Rob. Prior' Glaston. Will. Prior' Montisacuti Steph. Prior' Tanton. Will. Prior' Briuton. laudantibus & postulantibus Archid'is n'ris Rob'to & Th.
Donac'o prede'a de Hywis confirmatur p' Th. Arcp'um Cant." pp. 24, 25.

This is a very important contribution to our knowledge

of Muchelney, as it furnishes us with the name of an Abbat not included in the lists previously published.

"die Sabbati prox. post festu' exaltaco'is sc'e crucis Edw. de la Cuoll decanus Well obijt. & Tho. de Button Archid'us Well. missus est ad R. epum B.W. pro licentia ad eligendu' decanum. anno 1284. canonici citantur ad eligendu', no'ia absentium fuere, Nich. de Cranford, Will. fil. Will'i. Henr. de Grandisono. Malcolmus. Rob. de Fangfos. Nich. de sc'o Quintino. Tho. de Cherleton. Rob. de Waye. Roger de Turkeby. Bogo de Clare. Will. de Hameleden. Will. de Midelton. Walt. de Haselschagh. Walt. de Bathon. Abbas de Muchelney. Will. Burnell. Regin. de Legh. Ioh. de Dereby. Hen. Husee. Barth'us de Castell. Simon de Micham. Galfridus de Haspale. Reymundus de Radyng. Rad. de Freningh'. Nich. de Wodeford. Rog. Baret Ioh. de Kyrkebi. Ric. de Bamfeld. Iacob. de Hispan. Lodovicus de bello campo. Tho. de Midelton Gilb. de s'co Leofrico, Abbas de Atheln. & Tho. de Sudington." pp. 33, 34.

"hec donac'o [Rob. de Wallibus Joscelino Bath. ep'o (1206—1242)—advocaco'is eccl'ie de Eshull, al. Asshul] confirmatur p' Aliciam de vallibus matrem d'ci Rob'ti. testib. Ric'o Abb. Muchelney." p. 40.

"O'ibus——Benedictus dei gr'a Abbas de Alingen' & ejusd loci conv. salut—Univ. v're notu' facimus nos—concessisse & dedisse ven. p'ri n'ro d'no Iocelino Bath. ep'o [1206—1242] & succ. advocaco'em eccl'ie de Ilton cu' o'ibus pertin. Ita quod in perpetuu' prede'i ep'i pro voluntate sua libere de prede'a eccl'ia cu' omni integritate sua quemadmodum et de alijs ecclijs seu prebendis quas con-

ferunt, ordinent & disponant. hijs testibus Ric. Abbate de Muchelen'. mag'ro Helya de Derham, mag'ro Ioh'e de Ikeford &c." p. 42.

"O'ibus—F'r Ric'us deo annuente Muchelnensis Abbas & conv—salut.—concessimus dedimus & pres. carta—confirmavimus eccl'iam n'ram de Ilministre cu' o'ibus pertin. suis ecclie sc'i Andree Well.—canonicos etiam ipsius eccl. Well. in n'ram fraternitatem admittentes,—concedentes in perpetuum ut audito alicujus eorum (decessu) unum tritenarium missarum pro eo in conventu n'ro fiat. Decedentibus vero Decanis seu Precentoribus Wellens. fiet apud nos pro eis sicut pro Priore Mucheln. fieri consuevit, pro ep'is vero diocesanis quantum pro Abbatibus Mucheln. fieri consuevit. Dat. Dec. 1. 1201. testibus Alex. Decano. & mag. Willo de sancta fide Precentorio Well.

Hanc cartam sup' majus altare eccl. Well. offerebant d'ci Abb. & Conv." pp. 46, 47.

"Oibus — Decanus & Capitlu' Well. salut. Univ. v're notu' facimus nos inspexisse cartam—Savarici dei gr. Bath. & Glaston ep'i sub hac forma Oibus—Savaricus divina permissione Bath & Glaston ep'us—salut.—attendentes honestatem simul & paupertatem Micheln cenobij & f'rum ibidem deo servientium—deliberaco'e provida statuimus & ep'ali auctoᵗᵉ eis confirmavimus ut omnis garbe ecclie eorum de Sumerton de illa viz porco'e que ad eos ab antiquis temp'ibus dinoscitur p'tinere libere & quicte plenarie integre ad victus eorum necessaria cedant. cum servicijs ho'ium ad fundum ipsius eccl'ie pertinentium. salvis vicarijs ad presentaco'em Abbatum & monachis Micheln' in eadem eccl'ia substituendis toto altelagio terrisq' arabilibus & o'ibus obvenco'ibus & mi-

nutis decimaco'ibus tam ai'alibus quam de alijs rebus ad ipsam eccl'iam sive ad ejus capellas pertinentibus, unde ipsi vicarij o'ia emolumenta salvis ipsis monachis o'ibus garbis & ho'ium servicijs plenarie percipient, & o'ia onera tam Ep'alia quam Archidi'alia cum auxilio competenti d'corum Abb'is & monachoru' sustinebunt. ut autem pred'ca robur firmitatis obtineant—
hec carta confirmatur p' Rob. Prior' Bath & Conv."
pp. 59, 60.

"Io. [de Drokensford] B.W. ep'us [1309—1329] ded. & concessimus mag'ro Tho'e de Cherleton Archid'o Well. 20 acras pasture in manerio n'ro de Hywish que jacent in la Southmore in quadam placea inter novum clausum quod vocatur lytyluye, & extendit se in longitudine a manerio n'ro de la Hull usq' ad rivum aque versus Mucheln. habend & tenend sibi & succ. in p'petuu in separali. pro hac autem donaco'e remisit de'us Archid'us pro se & succ. suis totam communam pasture quam habere consuevit in novo clauso n'ro de la Southmore & la Northmore, salva tamen sibi & succ. decima feni & alioru' proficuoru' ad eccl. sua' de Hywish spectant'. Iun. 1317." p. 107.

"22 Feb. [1378] dies prefixus electioni futuri Decani. quo temp'e hi fuere prebendarij

Rob. Abbas de Athelney	Sutton.
Will. Abb. de Mochilney	Ilminster."
[cum multis aliis]	pp. 140, 141.

"Ex magno libro Cartarum penes Decan. & Capitl'm Well." p. 1.

"Will. fil. Henr. de Hardington concedit Abbatie de Keynsham, eccliam de Hardington, quam Savaricus ep'us

appropriavit dc'o Abbati & Canonicis. salva p'pet. & honesta vicaria. test. Ric. Abb. Muchiln. Alex. Decano Will. precentor', Rad'o de Lechelade Canonicis Well. Alano de Creton tunc offic. Hug. de Well. Ioscelin de Well. Rogero de Well, Ioh Camvell Canonicis Wellen'." [cir. 1200.] p. 3.

"Savaricus ep'us [1192—1205] confirmat Abbatie de Muchilney o'es garbas eccl'ie de Somerton de illa viz. porco'e que ad eos ab antiquis temp'ibus dinoscitur pertinere, salvis vicarijs (ad presentaco'em d'coru' Abb'is & Conventus) toto altalagio terrisq' arabilibus & o'ibus obvenco'ibus & minutis decimaco'ibus tam de ai'alibus quam de alijs rebus ad ipsam eccliam sive ad ejus capellas p'tinentibus unde ipsi vicarij o'ia emolumenta salvis ipsis monachis o'ibus garbis & ho'ium servicijs plenarie percipient, & o'ia onera tam ep'alia quam Archidi'alia cu' auxilio competenti d'coru Abbatis & monachoru' sustinebunt.—hijs testibus Benedicto Abb'e de Athelney. Durando Priore Montisacuti. Gilberto Priore Bruiton, Ioh'e Priore Tanton." pp. 5, 6.

"cantaria in mon. de Muchelney pro ai'a Nich'i Bubbewith ep'i B.W. 1433." p. 37.

"Nomina Ep'orum in Somers," &c. fol. 115.

"Savaricus 5^{us} Bathon ep'us [1192—1205] successit Reginaldo in ep'atum Bathon annis 12. Iste fuit consanguineus Henrici Imp'atoris Alamannie, qui regem Anglie Ric. 1^{um} in redeundo a terra sancta p' Leopoldu' Ducem Austrie captum in carceribus diu detinnit minus juste, & a d'co Imp'atore dictus obtinuit Savaricus q^{d} idem rex Anglie aliter non deberet a carceribus liberari nisi prius eidem Savarico & succ. suis concederet monasterium Glastonie

in escambiu' pro civitate Bathonie. Et cum d'cus rex Anglie post gravissimum pro sua liberaco'e redemptionem plenarie persolutam, ac ex tunc diram incarceraco'em annalem conspiceret se non posse aliter a carceribus liberari nisi votis Imp'atoris annueret in hac parte, misit pro Abbate Glastonie qui in Alamanniam ad dc'um regem accessit, et ep'atu Wigorniensi p' ipsum rege' sibi collato Savaricus Abbatiam predc'am obtinuit, quam Ap'lica regia et ordinaria auctoritate mense suc ep'ali univit ipsamq' ad terminum vite sue tenuit sic unitam, transtulitq' illic sedem suam ep'alem, & se fecit Glastoniens' ep'um publice appellari. Iste Savaricus erexit eccl'ias parochiales de Ilmestre & Langsutton in prebendas eccl'ie Well. quarum primam Abbati de Muchelneye, secundam Abbati de Athelneye & eorum successoribus contulit in perpetuum possidend. Hic etiam ep'atum suu' & eccliam Well. multis possessionibus ampliavit. Iste etiam de novo concessit burgensibus Wellie libertatem quam Reginaldus predecessor suus prius eis concesserat. Hic etiam Archidi'atum Bathonie Priori & Conventui Bathon & eorum succ. integraliter possidend concessit. Savarico tandem defuncto & apud Bathoniam tumulato," &c. f. 123, 123b.

"Ex alio Registro penes Dec. & Capl. Well vocat the Red booke." p. 1.

"20 Iun. 1491. Will. Wykes Abb. de Muchilney installat. in p'sona propria in prebend. de Ilmister." p. 31.

To those for whose perusal the foregoing extracts are intended it will be unnecessary for me to suggest their intrinsic value and the amount of multifarious information which they convey. They furnish us not only with a

truthful picture of the affairs of the House itself for many consecutive ages, but also with numerous allusions to events of social consequence, and with pleasant glimpses of the rules, usages, and vicissitudes of ecclesiastical life in England during the centuries to which they refer—centuries which are second to none, if they be not first of all, in sacred interest and national importance.

On behalf, however, of the general student, and yet not to enter upon matters extraneous to the present subject of our research, I must content myself with giving a list of the Abbats of Muchelney, as contained in and gathered from the MSS. now made available:—

Alan occurs as a witness to a charter of Robert, Bishop of Bath, Nov. 4, 1159.

Richard and his Convent give the church of Ilminster to the Cathedral Church of Wells, Dec. 1, 1201. The same Richard occurs as a witness to a charter of William de Hardington, to which Alexander, Dean of Wells, was also witness, which fixes the date at about 1200.

Another Richard is a witness to a charter of Benedict, Abbat of Athelney, cir. 1225; and to a confirmation of a previous charter by Alice, mother of Robert Vaux, at about the same period.

John de Somerton, Prior, is confirmed Abbat, 19 Aug., 1334. A chantry is founded for his soul in the Cathedral Church of Wells by Bp. Ralph de Salopia, 9 April, 1350.

John (incorrectly, as it appears, called in the printed books Thomas) de Overton, obtains the royal assent to his election, 30 May, 1349.

Thomas and his Convent present John Hunte to the vicarage of Fivehead, 21 Oct., 1352.

William is present, as Prebendary of Ilminster, at the election of a Dean of Wells, 22 Feb., 1378.

John is summoned to the election of a Dean of Wells, 26 May, 1410; and is cited to Convocation in St. Paul's, London, 18 Nov., 1415.

John Chierde, or Cherde, is summoned to attend the Council of Ferrara, in April, 1438; is present at the election of a Dean of Wells, 22 Aug., 1446; and dies 10 Sep., 1463.

Thomas Pipe is elected Abbat 20 Sep., 1463; and confirmed 3 Oct. of the same year.

John Bracy is summoned to the election of a Dean of Wells, 18 Dec., 1472; and dies 16 May, 1489.

William Wykes, Wyke, Wyk, or Wik, is elected Abbat 15 June, 1489; is installed Prebendary of Ilminster, 20 June, 1491; grants an annual pension to Rob. Hoby, 21 Aug., 1494; is cited to the election of a Dean of Wells, 25 Dec., 1498; and dies 1504.

Thomas Broke is confirmed Abbat, 21 Jan., 1504; is installed in his prebend of Ilminster, 6 Feb., 1504; presents clerks to various benefices in 1505, 1508, 1509, 1511, and 1512; is summoned to Convocation in 1509, 1514, and 1515; and dies in 1522.

John Shirborn is confirmed Abbat, 6 Nov., 1522.

Thomas Ive, the last Abbat of the House, and Convent present John Paslewe to the vicarage of Isle Abbats, 3 Aug., 1533.

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